Henry E Brooke

THE BEST MATCH; OR, THE Soul's Eſpouſal to *Chriſt*; Opened, and Improved.

By *EDWARD PEARSE*, Author of the Great Concern, or Preparation for Death.

John 3. 29, 30. *He that hath the Bride, is the Bridegroom*, &c.

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READER,

NExt to the full and immediate Viſion and Fruition of the God of Glory above, the greateſt Happineſs of Souls lies in Union and Communion with Chriſt here: Nor indeed can we ever attain unto the one without an acquaintance with the other. Now to bring thee into, and build thee up in this Union and Communion with Chriſt, and thereby to fit and diſpoſe thee for that glorious Viſion and Fruition Above, is the Principal Deſign of the enſuing Diſcourſe. If thou Requireſt a Reaſon of the Publication hereof, I deſire thee to ſatisfy thy ſelf with this; God in his All-wiſe and Holy Providence, hath ſeen good now for ſeveral Months to call the unworthy Author out of his Vineyard, and lodg him in a ſick Chamber; and he alſo ſeems to be ſpeedily calling him out of this World, and to bring that Night upon him wherein no Man can work: wherein nothing is to be done, either for God or Man's Soul, *John* 9. 4. And

being never like to do more for Chriſt on Earth, he was willing, in hopes of advancing his dear Lord's Kingdom, in the drawing of Sinners to him and building up of Saints in him, and Communion with him, to make theſe poor Contemplations public. God was pleaſed ſome few Years ſince, to make a more than ordinary uſe of the preaching of them, many Souls being through his Grace eſpouſed to Chriſt, and more brought nearer to him thereby; and had I not ſome hopes that he would alſo, through that ſame Grace of his, make ſome uſe of the reading of them for thy good, and the good of others, I think they had never ſeen the light: Thy good then, and Chriſt's Glory in the enlargement of his Kingdom, is the thing aimed at herein; which the good Lord by his Grace accompliſh. I am lying daily by the brink of the Grave, waiting upon the Will, and for the Call of my Sovereign Lord; the only Reaſon ſwaying with me to deſire Life, next to the more through-working out my own Salvation, is to reveal, and make known Chriſt to Souls, and to publiſh the glad

glad Tydings of Peace and Salvation to a loſt and ſinful World: But if God will make no further uſe of me that way, his Will be done. I comfort my ſelf with what an Holy Man ſpeaks, *Sinleſs glorifying of God*, ſaith he, *is better than ſinful glorifying of God.* His meaning I ſuppoſe is, that 'tis better to glorify God in a ſinleſs, than in a ſinful State. Truly here we ſin in our beſt Actions; and if we bring a little glory to God, yet woe and alas! how much diſhonour do we alſo bring him? And what Iniquities do there cleave to our moſt Holy Things? But Above we ſhall glorify him without ſinning; we ſhall love him, praiſe him, admire him, adore him, delight in him, and aſcribe Glory to him, without the leaſt taint or tincture of ſin cleaving thereunto; having not only all Tears wiped off our Eyes, but which is infinitely, infinitely, infinitely better, all Sin purged from our Hearts and Actions. Farewel. I leave thee, and this poor Treatiſe, to the Bleſſing of Heaven.

E. P.

To the Reader.

THere are two main Ends for which the Goſpel-Miniſtry *is ordained; the one is, the winning of Souls, and bringing them into Chriſt; the other is the* Edification *and building up of ſuch as are already brought in. It hath pleaſed Chriſt, the Head of the Church, who diſtributeth Gifts in order to the Salvation of Men, unto whom and in what meaſure he pleaſeth, to furniſh the Author of this Diſcourſe with good Abilities as to both theſe Works. As to the firſt, the Lord hath given him a peculiar Gift, to qualify him above many, to preach the Goſpel for the winning of Souls; and the Grace of God in him did inflame his Heart with ardent deſires, and did excite great longings in him after the converſion of Souls; and he was pleaſed to crown his own Gifts and grace in him with great ſucceſs, many a Soul having been turned unto God by his Labours. And it having pleaſed God to caſt the Author into a languiſhing Diſtemper for ſome Months, whereby he was wholly taken off from his Work in Preaching, ſo great did the deſire of doing good to Souls remain in him, and ſuch were the yearnings of his Bowels towards them, that being not able to ſpeak to them any longer out of the Pulpit, he could not ſatisfy himſelf, but he muſt needs ſpeak to them in this ſmall Tract; wherein his great Scope and principal Deſign is, to allure and draw Souls unto Chriſt. As to the Matter of the* Treatiſe, *I need ſay little, it will ſufficiently ſpeak for it ſelf; only thus much I*

may

may ſay, Union *with Chriſt is the foundation of our Happineſs. The Apoſtle tells us, that* Chriſt in us is the Hope of Glory; *We cannot have any ſure or ſound title to Eternal Life and Glory, but by Union with Chriſt; whoever are ſaved, are ſaved by being brought under Chriſt as their Head. Epheſ.* 1. 10. That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of Time, he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt; *that he might* bring them under one Head: *ſo* Zanchy *and others Interpret the Greek word there uſed: The Son of God incarnate, is the true* Vine *into which the Elect are implanted. There are but two Roots of Mankind, the* Firſt *and the* Second Adam; *the* Firſt Adam *is the Root of Sin and Death unto all that abide in him, the* Second Adam *is the Root of Righteouſneſs and Life unto all who are implanted into him. The Scope of this Diſcourſe, is to perſwade Men not to be content to abide in the Root upon which they naturally grow,* viz. *the Root of the* Firſt Adam, *but to ſeek after a new Relation unto Chriſt the* Second Adam. *The Arguments by which the Author preſſeth Souls to come to Chriſt, are moſt pathetical and ſtrong; and as there is a vein of Heavenly Affection, which runneth through the whole body of the Diſcourſe, to allure ſuch who are yet ſtrangers to the Lord Jeſus to fall in love with him; ſo there is much ſolid Matter interwoven, whereby thoſe who are already called, and have attained to ſome acquaintance with ſpiritual Things, may receive farther advantage. It pleaſeth the All-wiſe God to leave the Author at a great uncertainty as to Life; the Lord hath kept him in the Furnace long, but he hath choſen and refined him in it; and whether it be in this, or in the other World that he ſhall pleaſe to bring him forth, they who have moſt intimate converſe with him, are perſwaded he will* come forth as Gold. *The Lord grant that the ſame Pre-*

ſence of Divine Grace, which attended theſe Sermons in preaching of them, may accompany them in the publication, that many more Souls may be enamoured and drawn to the Love of that faireſt of ten Thouſand, the Lord Jeſus; that ſo knowing him, and adhering to him, they may be ſaved eternally by him, by whom all that have been, are or ſhall be ſaved, are brought to Life and Glory:

So prays

The unworthieſt of

Chriſt's Servants,

JOHN ROWE.

The

The Beſt Match;

OR,

The Soul's Eſpouſal to Chriſt.

From 2 Cor. 11. 2. *I have eſpouſed you to one Husband, that I may preſent you a chaſt Virgin unto Chriſt.*

CHAP. I.

Wherein an Introduction is made into our intended Diſcourſe, the Foundation thereof laid, and the Matters to be inquired into in our procedure therein propoſed.

A New Covenant-Relation to Chriſt, is certainly a Concern of the greateſt Weight, and higheſt Importance to the Sons of Men of any in the World; 'tis what lies at the Foundation of all true Happineſs, both in time and Eternity; whithout it (as a Learned Divine hath well obſerved) we are not Chriſtians, we are

only the Carcases of Christians; nor may we expect any saving advantage by any thing that Christ hath either done or suffered for poor Sinners: And this relation, of so much weight and importance to us, the Scripture represents under various Notions and Expressions to us: 'tis represented to us, sometimes under the Notion of a *King and Subjects*; hence Christ is called *King of Saints*: Sometimes under the Notion of a *Father and his Children*; hence he is called *the Everlasting Father*; and they are his own words unto God the Father: *Behold I, and the Children which thou hast given me.* Sometimes under the Notion of *Head and Members*; hence Christ is said to be the *Head of the Body, the Church:* and on the other hand, Believers are said to be *the body of Christ, and Members one of another.* And to mention no more; sometimes (as in my Text, and frequently elsewhere) 'tis represented to us under the Notion of 'Husband and Wife, Bridegroom and 'Bride, or the Soul's Espousal to Christ as its one 'and only Husband: And under this Notion I shall (God assisting) speak a little of it, and but a little, no more than to make way for a practical Design I have in my eye, which is to woo and allure poor Souls into an Espousal or Marriage-Covenant with this Blessed Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That then which is before us to be treated of, is the Marriage, or Espousal between Christ and Believers; and the better to make way hereunto, you may observe, that there is a threefold Marriage, as relating to Christ and us.

1. There is the Personal Marriage, and that is between the Person of the Son of God, the Second Person in the Trinity, and our Nature: This

Calvin

Calvin calls, *Verbum Incarnatum*, the Incarnate Word; or, as the *Evangelist* expresses it, *the Word made Flesh*, Joh. 1.14. this we generally call the Hypostatical Union.

2. There is the Mystical Marriage; and that is between the Person of Christ, God-Man, and the Person of Believers, as militant here on Earth; whole Christ, and the whole Believer being made one; this the Apostle calls, *A being joyned to the Lord, and being one Spirit with him*, 1 Cor. 6.17. and this we usually call the Spiritual Union.

3. There is the Heavenly Marriage; and that is between Christ and the Church triumphant above; which indeed is the consummation of the two former: and this I would call the Glorious Union; and what that is I can't tell, but do hope am going to see. —In the first of these lies the foundation of all our Happiness; by the second, we are brought into an initial participation of it; by the third, we are put into the full possession and enjoyment thereof for ever. Now, tis neither the first, nor the last, but second of these that the *Apostle* here speaks of, when he saith, *I have espoused you to one Husband, even to Christ*: Which accordingly I shall make the Subject of my ensuing Discourse; which, as also the sum of the Apostles intendment, you may take in this short Position, *viz.*

'That there is a blessed Espousal, or Marriage.
'Relation between Christ and Believers;
'or that Believers are married or espoused
'to Christ, as their only Husband.

I have espoused you, says the Apostle, *to one Husband*:

Husband; not to many, but to one; and who is that? why Christ, God-man: So the next words declare, *I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chast Virgin to Christ.* The same is also held forth in other Scriptures, *John* 3. 29. *He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom*, saith *John Baptist* concerning *Christ* and his Church: And again, *Rev.* 21. 9. *Come hither*, says the Angel to *John*, *and I will shew thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife*: That is, the Church, which is the Wife and Spouse of *Christ*; but I forbear.

What this Espousal or Marriage-relation between *Christ* and Believers is; as also how 'tis made up and accomplish'd, are the Principal things to be inquired into, for the clearing of what lies before us; which therefore I shall address my self unto.

CHAP. II.

The Espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, opened; and the import thereof laid down in five things.

BUT what is this Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers? The Apostle speaking of it, calls it *a great Mystery*: *This* (saith he) *is a great Mystery*; *but I speak concerning Christ, and his Church*, Ephes. 5. 32. I speak of that Spiritual Marriage that is between Christ and his People; which indeed is a great Mystery, that is, an hidden secret thing; a thing hid from humane reason,

reaſon, and not to be underſtood but by Divine Revelation, and the Light of the Holy Spirit. So far as we apprehend it, you may take this ſhort account in general of it: 'Tis that ſpiritual Conjunction or Relation that is between *Chriſt* and Believers, between the Perſon of Chriſt, and the Perſons of Believers, ariſing from his inhabitation in them by his Spirit, and their cloſing with him by Faith. Much might be ſaid for the opening of this general Concluſion; but I ſhall wave it, and give you the true nature of the *thing* under *conſideration*, more particularly, as carrying theſe five things in it, *viz.*

I. Free and cordial Donation.
II. Near and intimate Union.
III. Sweet and laſting Communion.
IV. Strong and ardent Affection.
V. Mutual reſt and complacency for ever.

I. This Eſpouſal or Marriage-relation between *Chriſt* and Believers, carries in it free and cordial Denotation; a giving of themſelves each to other. In Marriages or eſpouſals, the Parties give themſelves each to other; the Husband gives himſelf unto the Wife, and the Wife, by way of return, gives her ſelf unto the Husband; they conſent to take each other in that relation, and accordingly to give up themſelves each to other. So in this Spiritual Eſpouſal, or Marriage-relation between *Chriſt* and his People, there is a giving of themſelves each to other; they conſent to take each other, and accordingly to give up themſelves each to other. —*Chriſt*, on the one hand, gives himſelf unto the Soul: I will be thine, ſays he, to the Soul; thine to love thee, to ſave thee, to make thee happy in me, and with me: I, with all my Riches and Treaſures, will be fully and for ever thine, *I will be for thee*; that is the Language of his eſpouſing Love unto the

Soul,

Soul, *Hos.* 3. 3. And Oh how sweet is this Language! What can *Christ* give to poor Souls like himself? In giving himself, he gives the best Gift that either Heaven or Earth affords: In giving himself, he gives Life, he gives Peace, he gives Grace, he gives Righteousness, he gives the Favour of God, he gives Heaven, he gives all. Oh sweet Gift! ——On the other hand, the Soul, by way of return, gives himself to *Christ*: I will be thine, says the Soul to *Christ*, I will be for thee and not for another: Hence 'tis said, *They gave themselves to the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. They freely and willingly yielded up themselves to *Christ*, to be his, and his for ever: Sweet Jesus, such as I am, and have, I give to thee. I am a poor, a sorry Gift (says the Soul) infinitely unworthy of thine Acceptance; my Best is too bad, my All is too little for thee: but seeing 'tis thy pleasure to call for, and accept of such a Gift at my hands, I do with my whole Soul give up my Self, my Strength, my Time, my Talents, my All for ever to thee. And tho, the truth is, this be a sorry Gift, yet you little think how pleasing, how grateful it is to *Christ*, and what a value he puts upon it. You have the whole of this owned and asserted by the Spouse, *Cant.* 2. 16. *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.*

II. This Espousal, or Marriage-relation between *Christ* and Believers, carries in it near and intimate Union. In Marriage there is a very near union and conjunction between the Parties; As they give up themselves each to other, so they become one each with other; *They are no more twain, but one Flesh*, Mat. 19. 6. So in this Espousal, or Marriage-relation between *Christ* and Believers, there is a very near union and conjunction between

tween them, they two are made one; and thus the Apoſtle ſets forth the Marriage between *Chriſt* and them, *Epheſ.* 5. 31, 32. *For this cauſe ſhall a Man leave Father and Mother, and ſhall be joyned unto his Wife, and they two ſhall be one Fleſh. This is a great Myſtery; but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the Church*; that is, I ſpeak of the Marriage-relation which is between *Chriſt* and the Church, which conſiſts in Union: Hence alſo Believers are ſaid *to be joyned to the Lord, and to be one Spirit with him*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. So that eſpouſing to *Chriſt*, and being joyned to *Chriſt*, are all one. The truth is, herein lies the very Soul and Subſtance of this Spiritual Marriage, *viz.* in a ſpiritual Union between *Chriſt* and the Believer: tho *Chriſt* and the Soul were two before, two that were ſtrangers each to other, yet in this Marriage or Eſpouſal they become one, and ſo one, as that all the World can never make them two again, never diſſolve this Union. *By this uſual, but of all others moſt pleaſant Metaphor of a Bridegroom and Bride* (as a learned Man hath obſerved) *is expreſſed and ſet forth the Spiritual Union that is between Chriſt and the Church, Chriſt and every Holy Soul.* And this Union is a full Union, a Union between the whole Perſon of *Chriſt*, and the whole Perſon of the Believer; the whole Perſon of *Chriſt* is united unto the Believer, and the whole Perſon of the Believer is united unto *Chriſt*. *Neither is our Soul alone* (ſaith a Learned Man) *joyned with the Soul of Chriſt alone; nor is our Fleſh alone joyned with the Fleſh of Chriſt alone; but the whole Perſon of every Believer is truly joyned with the whole Perſon of Chriſt.*

1. On the one hand, the whole Perſon of *Chriſt* is united to the Believer; the Believers Union with *Chriſt*, is neither with the Divine nor Humane

mane Nature considered apart; but it is with the whole Person consisting of both Natures: and in deed, else they could not be said to be united to *Christ*; for neither of the *Natures*, considered apart is *Christ*: We cannot say, that the Divine Nature is *Christ*, or that the Humane Nature is *Christ*; but *Christ* is both the Divine and Humane Nature, God-Man, in one Person. *Christ* (saith a learned Man) *is not a Name of either Nature, but of the Person consisting of both Natures, together with his Office.* Besides, were we united only to one Nature, and not to the whole Person of *Christ*, what would our Union avail us? Surely it would be vain and ineffectual. Were we united to the Humane Nature only, and not to the Divine, then to be sure our Union must be ineffectual; For *Christ* himself tells us, *That it is the Spirit which quickneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing*, John 6. 63. That is (as judicious Interpreters expound it) the Flesh, or Humane Nature of *Christ* considered alone and without the influence of the Divine, availeth nothing to Souls as to their Spiritual or Eternal Good: Nor indeed can the Humane Nature of *Christ*, without the Divine, give Grace, or any spiritual good Thing. On the other hand, were we united to the Divine Nature alone, and not to the Humane, then our Union would be as ineffectual; for how full soever the Divine Nature is of Grace and Life in it self, yet nothing can thence be derived and communicated to us, but by and through the Humanity: And indeed, as the Humanity profiteth nothing without the Divinity; so I may say, the Divinity will profit us nothing without the Humanity. Hence it is, that *Christ* so often speaks of *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood*; and withal asserts the necessity there-

of

of in order to Life and Happineſs by him, *John* 6. 53, 54, 55. What *doth eating his Fleſh and drinking his Blood* ſignify, but an Union with his Humanity? And therefore in *verſ.* 56. he addeth, *He that eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him*; which is an Expreſſion of Union; and without this, we have, we can have no Life, no Grace from him. In a word, as the Humanity hath nothing to give or communicate to us, no Life, no Grace, no Spiritual Bleſſing without the Divinity; ſo the Divinity is incommunicable to us without the Humanity; and therefore were our Union with the one only, without the other, it muſt needs be ineffectual. I will cloſe this with the ſaying of an eminent Divine; *Altho all Life, all Salvation floweth from the Fulneſs of the Deity that is in Chriſt, yet notwithſtanding it is not communicated to us but in the Fleſh, and by the Fleſh of Chriſt. For the Deity is as the Fountain whence all good Things flow, Life and Salvation; but the Fleſh, or Humanity, is as the Channel, by which all theſe good Things, and all Gifts and Graces are derived unto us; therefore unleſs a Man apprehendeth this Channel, and be united to it, he cannot poſſibly be made a partaker of theſe Waters which do flow from this Fountain.*

2. On the other hand, the whole Perſon of the Believer is united to *Chriſt*; not his Soul only without his Body, nor yet his Body only without his Soul, but his whole Perſon conſiſting of both Soul and Body in conjunction: As *Chriſt* is the Saviour, ſo he is the Head of the whole Perſon of every Believer, for he ſaves none but thoſe whom he is Head unto: And as *Chriſt* is the Head of, ſo he muſt have union with the whole Perſon of every Believer; for his being an Head, implies Union, and that Union muſt extend as far as his Headſhip

ſhip doth, even to the whole Perſon: In ſhort, the Believer's Soul is united to *Chriſt*; therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.*6.17. *He that is joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit*; and the Believer's Body is united to *Chriſt*, and therefore the Bodies of Believers are ſaid to be *Members of Chriſt*, 1 Cor.6 15. Thus this Union is a full Union: and as it is a full, ſo it is a very near Union. Next to thoſe two great Unions, the eſſential Union, the Union of the Three Perſons in One and the ſame Divine Eſſence, and the Perſonal Union, the Union of the two Natures, Divine and Humane, in the Perſon of *Chriſt*; this is the neareſt Union. Hence it is expreſſed, ſometimes by their *being in each other*, John 14. 20. *Ye ſhall know, that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you:* ſometimes by their *dwelling in each other*; John 6. 56. *He that eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* And what can be nearer than to be and dwell in each other? It is a nearer Union than that between the Husband and the Wife, for that Union may be broken, and is at laſt, but this never is, never can be broken, as in its place will be ſhewn.

III. This Eſpouſal, or Marriage-relation between Chriſt and Believers, carries in it full and laſting Communion. In Marriage-relations there is a full and free Communion between the Parties, both in what they are, and what they have: The Husband admits the Wife into a participation in all he is and hath; on the other hand, he communicates with her in all ſhe is and hath; and indeed Union is in order to Communion. So here, in the Eſpouſal, or Marriage-relation between *Chriſt* and Believers, there is a full and free communion between them in all they are and have. On the one hand

hand, *Chriſt* communicates himſelf unto the Believer, he admits him into a fellowſhip and participation with him in all his riches and fulneſs; hence is that, *John* 1. 16. *Of his Fulneſs have we all received, and that Grace for Grace*: Verſ. 14. he is ſaid to be *full of Grace*: And what Grace is that? Why, all Grace, Perſonal Grace, Purchaſed Grace, Grace of Priviledg, and Grace of Influence: And here it is ſaid, that *of his Fulneſs have all we received*; not *ſome* only, but *all*, great and ſmall *have received*; and that not in a low, poor, ſcanty meaſure only, but in great abundance; therefore it's added, *and Grace for Grace*; or Grace upon Grace; heaps of Grace, Grace in a plentiful manner, all Grace needful for the Soul, Righteouſneſs, Remiſſion of Sins, Sanctification, Renovation of the Spirit, and the like. Look, whatever Chriſt is, or hath, which Believers are capable of, it is all theirs, and they all hold communion with him therein: His Beauty is theirs; and how black and deformed ſoever they are in themſelves, yet they are fair and comely in him: Hence ſaith the Spouſe, *I am black, but comely*, Cant 1.5. that is, black in my ſelf, but comely in Chriſt; black by Nature, but comely by the Redeemer's Grace; *comely through the comelineſs which he puts upon me*, Ezek. 16. 14. His Righteouſneſs is theirs; and how guilty and unrighteous ſoever they are in themſeves, yet in him they are Righteous, and do ſtand perfectly Righteous in the ſight of God: Hence his Name is ſaid to be, *The Lord our Righteouſneſs*, Jer. 23. 6. and they are ſaid to be made *the Righteouſneſs of God in him*, 2 Cor. 5 21. His Priviledges and Dignities are theirs; and how vile and baſe ſoever they are in themſelves, yet in him they are highly dignified and advanced. Is he a Son?

So

So are they through him: *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, to as many as believed in his Name*; John 1. 12. Is he an Heir, and Heir of God; ſo are they, they are Heirs, yea, *co heirs with him of God*, Rom. 8.17. Is he beloved by the Father, and that with a choice and ſingular love? ſo are they, they are beloved in him, *Epheſ.* 1. 6. yea, they are beloved with the ſame love, wherewith he is beloved by the Father, *John* 17. 23. Is he a King? ſo are they, he hath made them, and doth make them all Kings, and they do, and ſhall reign with him for ever, *Rev.* 1. 6. Is he in Heaven, in poſſeſſion of happineſs and glory? ſo are they: Hence they are ſaid *to ſit together with him in heavenly places*, Epheſ. 2. 6. What ſhall I ſay? his Glory is theirs: *The Glory which thou gaveſt me* (ſaith he to his Father) *I have given them*, Joh. 17. 22. Yea, all his Divine Fulneſs is theirs; and how empty and imperfect ſoever they are in themſelves, yet they are perfect and *compleat in him*, and in his Fulneſs; *Col.* 2. 9, 10. *In him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*; bodily, that is, truly, perfectly, unchangeably, and not typically only, as in the Temple of old. All the fulneſs and perfection of the Godhead dwelleth truly and prefectly in him: And what then? why it follows, *and yea are compleat in him*, q. d. You are poor and empty things in your ſelves, but your Head and Husband hath all the fulneſs of the Godhead in him, and it is always in him; for it dwelleth in him, and it is all yours, and you do communicate with him in all, ſo far as you are capable of it, to compleat you both in Grace and Glory. Thus Chriſt communicates himſelf unto the Believer, and admits him into a participation with him in all he is and hath.

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On the other hand, Christ partakes and holds communion with Believers in all they are and have: And what is their All? truly a poor All; in and of themselves, they have nothing but sins and sorrows, guilt and affliction. Indeed, in marrying of them, he gives them Gifts, Graces, Comforts, and the like; and having given them these, he holds communion with them in all; their Gifts and Graces, their Joys and Comforts are his: But, I say, in and of themselves they have nothing but sorrows and sins, and he in a sort holdeth communion with them in both: Hence it is said, that *in all their afflictions he is afflicted*, Isa. 63. 9.

He looks upon their Sorrows as his, and their Sufferings as his. *I was an hungry, and ye gave me no Meat; I was thirsty, naked, imprisoned*, &c. *Mat.* 25. 35, 36. And often (you know) in Scripture, their Sufferings and Afflictions, are called the Sufferings and Afflictions of Christ: And why the Sufferings and Afflictions of Christ? not only because for the most part they suffer for his sake; but also because he suffereth and is afflicted in them, and with them: He communicates with them in their Afflictions: And, as in their Sorrows, so also in some sort in their Sins too: Hence he calls their Sins, as well as their Afflictions, his. *Mine Iniquities have taken hold upon me*, Psal. 40. 12. Which *Luther*, and others, understand of Christ speaking of our Sins, and calling them his: Not, my Beloved, that he doth admit of any the least stain, or tincture of sinful defilement upon himself, but he so looks upon our Sins as his, as to take them off from us, and looks upon himself responsible to the Father's Justice for them: So he was said to *be made sin for us*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. ... O what Grace is here! I close this Head with a great and

sweet

ſweet ſaying, which I have read in one of the Ancients, ſuitable to this purpoſe. 'The like ſweet 'Names are not to be found, by which the ſweet 'Affections of Chriſt and the Soul are expreſſed 'each to other, as thoſe of the Bridegroom and 'the Bride; for why, all things are common with 'them, nothing proper, having nothing ſeparate 'and apart each from other; they have both one 'Inheritance, one Houſe, one Table, one Marri-'riage-bed, alſo one Fleſh: the ſum is, they communicate with each other in all they are and have.

IV. This Eſpouſal, or Marriage relation between Chriſt and Believers, carries in it ſtrong and ardent Affection. In a Marriage-relation, there is the deareſt, ſtrongeſt, and moſt intimate Affection that is to be found among the Children of Men: 'Tis a Relation made up of Love: Love is not only a concomitant of Marriage, but it is even a part of it, and is eſſential to it: In Marriage, hearts muſt be joyned as well as hands, or they are not right: So here in this Spiritual-eſpouſal, or Marriage-relation between Chriſt and Believers, there is a very dear and intimate Affection each to other; their Hearts are indeed knit, and do intimately cleave to one another: *The Saints* (ſays one) *are called the Spouſe of Chriſt, Propter amoris magnitudinem*; becauſe of that great and unparallel'd love that is between them. And it is a ſweet ſaying, which I have read in one of the Ancients to this purpoſe. 'Chriſt *(ſays he)* 'calls himſelf our Bridegroom, that he might 'inſinuate the greatneſs of his Love to us, which 'decays not with time; and he calls us his Spouſe, 'not his Wife, noting that our Love to him ſhould 'be always new, always lively and vigorous. The

truth

truth is, no Love like that between Chriſt and his Spouſe; Chriſt loves and eſpouſes, and the Soul loves and is eſpouſed; and both being eſpouſed, do love for ever; and ſo this Relation is both founded in Love, and perfected in Love; 'tis both made up and managed with love on all hands; Chriſt ſets his love upon the Soul, and in that love eſpouſes him to himſelf; and having in this love of his eſpouſed him to himſelf, then he loves him as his Spouſe: often in the Book of *Canticles* his Spouſe is called his Love; as alſo he on the other hand is called her Beloved: and what doth this note, but that the whole Relation conſiſts mainly in Love, and that they are more dearly and intimately beloved by each other? Chriſt having eſpouſed the Soul to himſelf, now his Love runs out in full ſtreams towards him; he loves him above all the reſt of the Creatures, in ſome reſpects above the Angels themſelves, as ſtanding in a nearer relation to him than they do. On the other hand, the Soul's love is drawn out to Chriſt, and loving him, he is eſpouſed to him; and being eſpouſed to him, he loves him yet more; now *Chriſt is laid between his breaſts*, in his moſt intimate Affections, he has the Throne in his heart, *Cant.* 1. 13. yea, the Soul by degrees comes to be *ſick of love* to him (as you have it) *Cant.* 2. 5. *Stay me with Flagons*, (ſays ſhe) *comfort me with Apples, for I am ſick of Love:* to whom? to Chriſt. And truly this (as one of the Ancients hath obſerved) *is a ſweet ſickneſs, a bleſſed languor, a pleaſant love*: And this love between Chriſt and his Spouſe, is a chaſt love, a Virgin love, a love that is pitched upon the Perſon of each other; Chriſt loves the Perſon of the Believer, and the Believer loves the Perſon of Chriſt. Of which more in its place.

V. This

V. This Espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, carries in it a mutual rest and complacency for ever. In a Marriage-relation, there is great delight and complacency the parties have, or should have each in other, especially in the day of espousals. You know how *Solomon* speaks, *Rejoyce with the Wife of thy Youth: let her be as the loving Hind and pleasant Roe: let her Breasts satisfie thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love*, Prov. 5. 18, 19. All noting that joy, rest, and complacency that that relation carries in it, and the Parties have in each other; and we read (you know) of the joy of the Bridegroom, as the highest and purest that is found among the Sons of Men: So in this Spiritual Espousal between Christ and Believers, there is a mutual rest and complacency which they have in each other: They are, as it were, the rest, the joy, the satisfaction of each other; the solace of each others Souls. On the one hand, Christ rests and rejoyces in the Believer, as one would do in the Wife of his Youth: This his Spouse is to him, *as a loving Hind, and pleasant Roe*, and he lives joyfully with her; hence she is called his delight, and that as being Married to him: *Thou shalt be called* Hephzibath, (says he to her) *for the Lord delighteth in thee*, thou shalt be the joy and delight of my Soul, *Isa.* 62. 4. And again, *As a young Man marrieth a Virgin, so shall thy Sons marry thee; and as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee*, vers. 5. The sum of all which amounts to this, That Christ marrying his People to himself, delights in them, and rejoyces over them, and that with the highest and purest delight and complacency of all others, a delight and complacency

by ſuitable to the relation: The truth is, he ſpeaks as if all his delight were in them, as if he had forgotten to delight in the Angels, or in any of the works of his hands, but in them alone. *My goodneſs* (ſays he to the Father) *extendeth not to thee, but to the Saints, in whom is all my delight*, Pſal. 16. 2. Yea, he declares himſelf Raviſhed with them, as his Spouſe; Cant. 4. 9. *Thou haſt raviſhed my heart, my Siſter, my Spouſe; thou haſt raviſhed my heart*: And he ſpeaks as one raviſhed indeed. *Cant.* 7. 6. *How fair and pleaſant art thou, O Love, for delight!* and *Chap.* 6. *v.* 6. he acknowledges himſelf captivated by her, *Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me*: Yea, he has declared them to be his Reſt, Pſal. 132. 14. *This is my reſt for ever*, (ſays he) *here will I dwell, for I have deſired it*: It's ſpoken of *Zion*, as a Type of the Church, and Spouſe of Chriſt, and his reſt in her; and indeed they are his Reſt, his Soul is at reſt in them, in them is his higheſt joy. Hence that ſweet word, *Zeph.* 3. 17. *The Lord thy God, in the midſt of thee is mighty; he will rejoyce over thee with joy; he will reſt in his love upon thee, he will joy over thee with ſinging*; as much as to ſay, his whole reſt, ſolace, and delight ſhall be in thee. On the other hand, the Believer reſts and rejoyces in Chriſt, as in his Head and Husband: *I ſat down under his ſhadow* (ſays the Spouſe) *with great delight*, Cant. 2. 3. She did *ſuaviter requieſcere* (as one expreſſes it) ſweetly reſt, and repoſe her Soul in him: Her Soul was at reſt, and filled with delight, great delight, ſhe had great ſpringing of joy within her, and all this in Chriſt her Bridegroom; in his Perſon, in his Preſence, in his Protection, in the fruits of his Grace and Love: And therefore it follows, *and*

his Fruit was sweet to my taste; as if she would say, O with what joy, what solace, what delight and satisfaction of Soul did I converse with him, and feed upon him! Thus in these Espousals there is mutual delight and satisfaction between Christ and Believers: and O how sweet is this! this makes this Espousal to relish strongly of Heaven, and to set the Soul down even at the Gate thereof. Thus I have shewen you what this Espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers is.

CHAP. III.

In which the way and means of the accomplishment of this Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers is enquired into, and a general account thereof given.

HAving seen somewhat of the Nature of the Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, the next thing to be enquired into is, How this Espousal or Relation is made up and accomplished: To be sure, naturally we are all strangers to it, and unacquainted with it, being (as the *Apostle* speaks) *without Christ*, that is, without union with him, or any spiritual Relation to him, *Ephes.* 2. 12. But how then, and in what way is it brought about? In general, it is from Divine Grace, the Grace of God in Jesus Christ acting and laying out it self for us and upon us; and it is from Divine Grace

two

two ways; or as that Grace carries a double oppoſition with it. *Firſt*, As it ſtands in oppoſition to any thing of worth or deſervings in us; and ſo it flows from the riches of Divine Grace, as its only ſpring and Fountain: And, *ſecondly*, as that Grace ſtands in oppoſition to any thing of power or ability in us; and ſo it is effected by the Power of Divine Grace as its Principle and Efficient. Accordingly take this General in theſe two Propoſitions:

I. This Eſpouſal or Marriage-relation between Chriſt and Believers, flows from the Riches of Divine Grace, as its only Spring and Fountain, That any of the Sons of Men are Married and Eſpouſed to Chriſt, is not from any thing of worth or deſervings in them, but purely and intirely from free Grace and Love, dwelling and working in the Heart of God and Chriſt towards them; and this account the Scripture gives us of it, Jer. 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love; therefore with loving kindneſs have I drawn thee:* as if he ſhould ſay, I have drawn thee out of thy ſins, out of thy unbelief, out of thy carnal reſts and refuges, and I have drawn thee to my ſelf, into union and communion with my ſelf, into a Marriage-covenant and Relation with my ſelf; and all this from mine own free love, that love, that kindneſs, that has been in my heart towards thee from everlaſting. So again, Hoſ. 2. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and in loving kindneſs, and in mercies.* Mark, it is mercy and loving kindneſs, which Eſpouſes Souls to Chriſt. *God* (ſays one upon this place) *Eſpouſes us to Chriſt, indued thereunto by no merits of ours, but by his*

own goodneſs and mercy. And indeed my *Beloved*, what have we, or what have any of the Sons of men, that ſhould ſpeak the one or the other worthy of a conjugal-relation to Chriſt, or that ſhould invite and induce him to take us into ſuch a relation to himſelf? Have we Birth or Parentage to induce him? No, alas! as to our ſtate, we are all of the brood of Hell, and thence, as ſinners, we all have our deſcent and original, *Joh.*8.44. Have we beauty and amiableneſs? No, for we are all black and deformed in our ſelves, we have the ſpirit of the Devil in us, and the image of the Devil upon us; we are blind, and deaf, and dumb, and lame, and crooked: ſo the Scripture ſpeaks of us in our natural ſtate. We are all *in our blood* and gore; *caſt out into the open field to the loathing of our Perſons*, Ezek.16. 5,6. And as their caſe is repreſented, *Iſa.* 16. ſuch is ours ſpiritually, *Even from the ſole of the foot, to the crown of the head, there is no ſoundneſs in us, nothing but wounds, and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores:* In a word, we are all ſin, and have nothing but ſin. *Know, O ſpouſe of Chriſt*, (ſays one of the Ancients) *that thou haſt nothing of thy ſelf but ſins; as for all thy good things, they are the Grace of thy Bridegroom to thee, to whom therefore give the glory of it*: I ſay, we have nothing but ſin: and is there any beauty, any comelineſs in that to attract an Holy Jeſus? ſurely no. Have we Riches and Treaſures? No; for indeed we are *poor and miſerable, and blind, and naked*, Rev.3.17. Treaſures, it is true, we have, but they are black ones; treaſures of ſin and wickedneſs, treaſures of guilt and wrath, which ſurely cannot render us worthy, but moſt unworthy of ſuch a Relation. Have we wiſdom and parts to invite him? No; we are *altogether brutiſh and fooliſh*,

liſh, Jer. 10. 8. *Wiſe we are, but is to do evil; to do good we have no knowledg*, Jer. 4. 22. Have we love and kindneſs in us towards him, good nature? No; for naturally we love him not; yea, we *hate him*, and are enemies to him, *Luk.* 19. 14. We hate both him and the Father, as he charged the Jews of old; yea, we are are enmity it ſelf to him, *Rom.* 8. 7. We are Enemies to his Perſon, to his Kindom, to his Grace, to his Righteouſneſs, to his Ways, and to all acquaintance and communion with him: Thus we have nothing to induce him to take us into ſuch a Relation: at the beſt, we are but poor *Worms, whoſe Foundation is in the Duſt*: And what can it be, but free and rich Grace in Chriſt to marry and eſpouſe ſuch unto himſelf?

II. This Eſpouſal, or Marriage relation between Chriſt and Believers, is wrought and effected by the Power of Divine Grace, as its principle and efficient: When Souls are married and eſpouſed to Chriſt, 'tis not done by any power or ability of their own, nor yet by the power and efficacy of means and inſtruments, but 'tis purely from the power and efficacy of Divine Grace: Indeed, God makes uſe of Means and Inſtruments, he makes uſe of the Goſpel and Goſpel-Miniſters for the eſpouſing of Sinners to his Son; and theſe are the only ordinary way and means whereby he doth it: therefore ſays the *Apoſtle* in my Text, [*I*] *have eſpouſed you to one Husband*, that is, I by my Miniſtry, I by preaching the everlaſting Goſpel, have been an Inſtrument in God's Hand for your eſpouſing to Chriſt: But tho God thus makes uſe of means and inſtruments in this Work, yet ſtill the Work it ſelf is from pure Grace, and to Grace doth Chriſt attribute it, excluding all other power but this as ſuffi-

cient hereunto. *Joh.6.44. No man can come to me*, or believe on me, cloſe with me in a Marriage-covenant, *except the Father, which hath ſent me, draw him*; that is, except the Power of Divine Grace be put forth upon him in order hereunto. The drawing Chriſt here ſpeaks of, is comprehenſive of the whole buſineſs; 'tis the enabling of us to come to Chriſt, to believe on him, and to cloſe with him as our Head and Husband. It notes (as one obſerves) not any violent coaction or conſtraint, but a ſweet bowing of the Will, which in it ſelf was averſe from, and oppoſite to God and Chriſt; and withal, a carrying of the Soul to Chriſt, and an enabling of him to cloſe with him in this Relation: and this Chriſt aſcribes wholly to the power of Divine Grace. The truth is, in and of our ſelves we have no power or ability for ſuch a Work; we are *without ſtrength*, Rom. 6. 5. Yea, when we are brought into Chriſt by the power of Divine Grace, yet then, in and of our ſelves *we can do nothing*; ſo Chriſt tells us, *John* 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing*. Yea, when we are brought into Chriſt, and have had ſome communion with him, yet we can't follow after him, nor draw one tittle nearer to him, unleſs a freſh influence of Divine Grace be put forth upon us, enabling us thereunto; ſo much the Spouſe was ſenſible of, and therefore prays thus, *Draw me, and we will run after thee*, Cant. 1. 4. As if ſhe ſhould ſay, Lord, in my ſelf I can't ſtir one foot towards thee; but do thou put forth thy power in drawing me, and then, and not till then, ſhall I come nearer to thee: Yea, my Beloved, the eſpouſing of Souls to Chriſt, is not only the Act or Work of Divine Grace, and the Power of it, but 'tis the Act or Work of the mighty Power of that Grace; 'tis not an ordinary power that is and muſt

muſt be put forth therein, but even the greatneſs of the power of that Grace, a Power no leſs than that which was put forth *in raiſing Chriſt from the Dead*: So the *Apoſtle* tells us, *Eph.* 1. 18, 19,20. *That you may know* (ſays he) *what is the exceeding greatneſs of his Power to us-ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty Power which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the Dead.* So then here is Power, mighty Power, the mighty Power of God, the greatneſs of the mighty Power of God, the exceeding greatneſs of the mighty Power of God, the ſame exceeding greatneſs of the mighty Power of God which raiſed Chriſt from the Dead; and all put forth to enable us to believe, and ſo to cloſe with Chriſt in a Marriage-covenant. Thus this Work is every way from Divine Grace. But here more particularly, the enquiry will be, What thoſe Acts or Works of Divine Grace are, by which poor Sinners come to be eſpouſed to Chriſt? I ſhall reduce them all to two Heads; they are either (firſt) more remote, being Acts of Divine Grace put forth for us, and towards us; or (ſecondly) more near, being Acts of Divine Grace put forth in us, and upon us: In the firſt, the Father and Jeſus Chriſt work more immediately by and from themſelves: In the ſecond, they work by the influence and miniſtry of the bleſſed Spirit: I'le ſpeak a little of each.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein are contained the more remote Acts of Divine Grace, put forth more immediately by the Father and Jesus Christ, for us, and towards us, in order to the accomplishment of the Espousal between Christ and us.

THere are some more remote Acts of Grace, Acts of Grace put forth more immediately by the Father and Jesus Christ, for us, and towards us, in order to the making up of this Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and us; and of these I shall mention five, all which do necessarily concur, and have their influence into this business, and indeed there is much of the Mystery of God in them: They are these.

I. God the Father Marries and Espouses our Nature to the Person of his Son, and thereby fits and prepares him to be an Husband for us; this God has done once for all, and the influence thereof concurs unto the accomplishment of the Espousal between Christ and every Believer; I shall illustrate this unto you, from that Parable, *Mat.* 22. *beg.* where we read of *a King that made a marriage for his Son*: by which King we are to understand God the Father; and by his Son, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of that Eternal Father. He, who proceeded from him by eternal Generation. God the Father then is said to make a Marriage for his Son: But, pray, who is the Spouse? 'tis observed by

by Divines, that the Spouſe is not here mention'd: who or what then is ſhe? 'Tis anſwered, Chriſt has a two-fold Spouſe; our Nature, and the Perſons of Believers: Both which may be intended here, tho the firſt chiefly and principally; and ſo by the Marriage here, we are to underſtand the perſonal Marriage, the Marriage between the Perſon of the Son of God and our Nature; and ſo *Calvin* and others expound it: This primarily; but ſecondarily, and by conſequence, the ſpiritual Marriage, the Marriage between Chriſt and Believers; and we are to look on the one as laying a Foundation, and making way for the other: So that the whole reſolves into this, That God the Father hath married and eſpouſed our Nature to the Perſon of his Son in the Hypoſtatical Union, and thereby has fitted and prepared him to be an Husband for us, and made way for the marriage of our Perſons to his Perſon in the Spiritual Union. And indeed, unleſs our Nature had been firſt married to him in the one, our Perſons could never poſſibly have been married to him in the other; for pray obſerve, the Glory of Chriſt conſidered as the Eternal Son, and ſo as God, is too bright, and the diſtance betwixt him & us is too great for us to come to him, and be made one with him in a Marriage-relation: Chriſt conſidered in his own naked Glory, as God, is too bright an Object for us to look upon, much more to have ſo near an union to, and communion with; one ſight of him thus conſidered, is enough to ſwallow us up, and even to overwhelm our Spirits; we cannot thus ſee him and live: But now our Nature being married and eſpouſed to his Divine Perſon; that is to ſay, he having aſſumed our Nature into union with himſelf, as the eternal Son, which the *Evangeliſt*

calls his being *made Flesh*, Joh. 1. 14. And the *Apostle*, *his partaking of Flesh and Bloud*, Heb 2. 14. Hereby the overwhelming brightness of his Glory is veiled, and the dreadful terror of his Greatness, together with the affrighting distance between him and us is taken away: Yea, hereby his Glory is brought down (as one hath it) to our eye, to our beholding: Hereby he has marvellously sweetned and endeared himself to us, and made way for us, for a free access to him, and the neerest union and communion with him: Hence Divines give us this as one Reason of Christ's Incarnation, that he might thereby become a fit Husband for his People, and they might be capable of union and communion with him: *Therefore* (as a learned Man has observed) *was the Son of God made Man, that he might be a true, a fit Bridegroom for the Church*; and 'tis rightly observ'd by Divines, that in strict propriety of speech, neither the Father, nor the Holy Spirit; but the Son, the second Person in the Trinity, is the Churches Bridegroom; and they give this reason for it, because he only was made Man, he only was incarnate. O, had not the Son of God been incarnate, had he not (as *Austin*'s expression is) *married our Nature to himself in the Womb of the Virgin*, none of us had ever been capable of such a privileg, such an hapoineſs, as a conjugal union and communion with him. That therefore is the first Act of Grace in this business.

II. God the Father gives Christ unto the Soul, and the Soul to Christ; he gives Christ for an Head and Husband to the Soul, and he gives the Soul for a Bride or Spouse to Christ. (First) He gives Christ for an Head and Husband to the Soul, in *John* 4. 10. Christ is called *the Gift of God*; And how

and also. 2 Cor. 11. 15.

how the Gift of God? two ways, (firſt) in that he gave him for us; he gave him to be incarnate, to ſuffer, to bleed, to die, to be made Sin and a Curſe for us; he gave him as an Offering and a Sacrifice for us. And (ſecondly) in that he gives him alſo to us; He gives him to be an Head and Husband to us: Hence 'tis ſaid, That *he gave him to be Head to the Church*, and ſuch an Head as has the command and diſpoſe of all things; *He gave him to be Head over all things to the Church*, Eph. 1. 22. both in the Council of of his Will from Eternity, and alſo in the act or work of his Grace here in time, he thus gives Chriſt to us: And O how richly and gloriouſly doth his Grace ſhine forth herein! in giving Chriſt to us, he gives his beſt and his deareſt; for he has nothing better, nothing dearer to him than his Chriſt, as afterwards may be ſhewn. (Secondly.) He gives the Soul for a Bride or Spouſe to Chriſt: Believers (you know) are often ſaid to be given by the Father to Jeſus Chriſt; *my Father which gave them me* (ſays *Chriſt* concerning Believers) *is greater than all*, Joh. 10. 29. And *thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me*, Joh. 17. 6. with many other places which might be mentioned. God gives all the Elect to Chriſt to be his Spouſe; he gives them to him (firſt) in the eternal purpoſe and counſel of his Grace; in the day of everlaſting Love, when God firſt ſet his heart upon his choſen ones, then gave he them to his Son, and will'd their union to him in a Marriage-covenant; and he gives them to him alſo (ſecondly) in the work of Vocation, which makes way for the working of Faith in Chriſt in the Soul. *The Father* (ſays he) *hath given this Spouſe to his Son* (ſpeaking of his Church) *and joins her to him by his Spirit.* And, my beloved, without this

this Act of Grace put forth by God towards us, the Match would never be made between Christ and any poor Soul; for this indeed is that which brings the Soul to Christ: So much Christ himself tells us, *Joh.6.37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.* Mark, 'tis the Father's giving us to Christ, that brings us to him; and were we not by the Father given to him, we should never come to him by believing, there could never came to him by believing; and if we never be a Marriage-union and relation between him and us.

III. Christ readily approves and accepts of the Father's Gift, being willing, yea longingly desirous to espouse them unto himself, whom his Father gives him in order thereunto. In the making up of a Marriage, 'tis not enough that the Father gives such or such an one to his Son, and his Son to her; but there must also be the consent of the Son; he must approve and accept of the Father's Gift: and so does Christ here, he approves and accepts of the Fathers Gift: the Father wills his taking such and such poor, Sinners to Wife, and accordingly gives him to them, and them to him, and the Will of Christ falls in with, and is conformed to the Will of the Father herein, and so the Match goes on: this you have clearly held forth, *Joh 6. 37. All that the Father hath given me, come unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out* Mark, here are among others, two things. 1. Here is the Fathers giving of poor Sinners to Christ, and therein his Will and Consent that they should be espoused to him, in these words, *All that the Father hath Given me.* 2. Here is Christ's approbation and acceptation of the Gift of the Father, with his Will and Consent to espouse them to himself, in these words, *And him that cometh*

unto

unto me, I will in no wise cast out; that is, I will assuredly receive him, and accept of him; I will take him into a conjugal union and relation to my self. Christ here plainly declares his acceptance of the Fathers Gift, giving poor Sinners to him to be his Spouse. 'Tis a great saying, and sutable to this I am speaking, which I have read in a great Divine, *The eternal Will and good Pleasure of God precedes* (says he); *but Christ the Bridegroom cannot but will the same thing which the Father wills; his Will is conformed to the Fathers, and therefore does he accept us as his Spouse.* In a word in this Act of Grace, Christ's Language is such as this; Father, dost thou give such and such poor Sinners to me? and is it thy Will, that they should be espoused to me? Content, I do freely accept of them, and am willing to espouse them to my self for ever: 'tis true, they are poor worthless Creatures, altogether unsutable to my dignity and greatness; but, Father, they are thy Gift, and I accept of them as such: true, there is no beauty in them that I should desire them, but they are thy Gift, and I will marry them and make them beautiful: and O what Grace is this!

IV. The Lord Jesus Christ not only approves and accepts of the Father's Gift, but moreover he redeems them thus given to him, with the price of his own Blood; he ransoms them from Sin, and Death, and Hell, whereunto in themselves they were all in bondage; which also necessarily concurs to the accomplishment of the espousal between him and them. 'Tis observed by some, that in the Eastern Countries it was the manner for Men to buy their Wives; and indeed so much seems to be intimated in that Message of *Saul* to *David*, 1 Sam. 18. 25. Where, when he would perswade

ſwade *David* to marry his Daughter, in pretence at leaſt, he ſends him word, that he deſired not any Dowry, but ſo and ſo: It ſeems then, that it was uſual to expect a Dowry. The ſame alſo appears by the practice of *Shechem*, Gen. 34.11,12. where being in love with *Dinah*, *Jacob*'s Daughter, he profered to give a Dowry for her; *Give me* (ſays he) *but thy Damſel to Wife, and ask me never ſo much Dowry and Gift, and I will give it thee.* To be ſure ſo 'tis here, Chriſt buys all his Spouſes, and gives a vaſt Gift for them; Chriſt indeed is in love with poor ſinners, given him by the Father, and deſires to marry them to himſelf; but he muſt buy them if he means to have them, and buy them he does, and at a dear rate, he gives a great Dowry for them, even his Life, his Blood, his Glory, and all for a time. Hence he is ſaid *to give himſelf for us*, Epheſ. 5.25. and to *purchaſe us by his Blood*, Acts 20. 28. Hence we are ſaid to be *bought by him with a price*, with a great price, with a price of ineſtimable value, even *his own moſt precious Blood*, 1 *Cor.* 6.20. The caſe lies thus: the Elect, as well as others, were all gone into Captivity, ſold under Sin and Satan, in bondage to Death, and Hell, and Wrath, which is the condition of all by Nature; and if Chriſt will have them as his Spouſe, he muſt ranſom and redeem them from all; which accordingly he does: he bleeds, he dies, *he gives himſelf a ranſom* for them, in order to the marrying of them to himſelf: He had indeed a mind to a Spouſe among the Children of Men, and was in love with them from all eternity, as he himſelf tells us, *Prov.* 8. 31. and ſo in love with them, as that he does in effect ſay unto the Father, as *Shechem* did to *Jacob*, *Ask me never ſo much Dowry, and I will give it.* Why, my Son,

ſays

ſays the Father, if thou wilt have them, and marry them to thy ſelf, thou muſt give thy Blood, thy Life for them; thou muſt redeem them from Sin, and Death, and Hell, whereunto they are in bondage; which can't be done by leſs than by giving thy ſelf a Ranſom for them: all which Chriſt aſſents unto, and complies with, and that with delight, freely giving himſelf for them. And O what Grace is this! Oh to give ſuch a price for ſuch a Spouſe! a Price ſo great, for a Spouſe ſo black and unworthy; this is a glorious Grace indeed.

V. Chriſt makes love to them, tenders himſelf unto their embraces, and withal wooeth them for their acceptance of him, and that with the greateſt and moſt affectionate importunity: How much ſoever it has coſt *Chriſt* to redeem poor Sinners, & how great a Dowry ſoever he has given for them, yet they are unwilling to cloſe with him, they have no mind, no heart Chriſtward, and ſo the Match is not like to be made up unleſs ſomething further be done; therefore after all, Chriſt (as one phraſes it) comes a wooing to them, he makes love, offering himſelf to them, and earneſtly ſollicites them for their love and acceptance: he importunes them, and that in ſuch a way, as if he were reſolved to take no denial; in *Ezek.* 16. 8. we read of a *time of love*, a time (that is) of Chriſts making love to Sinners lying in their blood and gore. And indeed, Chriſt has times of love, times when he makes love, and offers himſelf with all his Riches and Treaſures to poor Sinners; when his Language to them is, *Behold me, behold me*, Iſa. 65. 1. and *look unto me, and be ye ſaved all ye ends of the earth*, Iſa. 45. 22. Now he comes, and tells over the ſtories of his love to them, how much he

he has done and suffered for them, how much his desire is towards them, what great things he will bestow upon them, and instate them into, and all to win and allure them to himself, to gain their love and consent to accept of him, and to be his in a Marriage-covenant. Time was when Christ came and did this himself in Person; when he *stood, and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*, John 7. 37. Time was, when in his own Person he importuned poor Sinners from day to day, he made love to them time after time, as he did (you know) to *Jerusalem*, Mat. 23. 37. For some Years together he wooed them, and offered himself and his Grace to them in his own Person; and tho he does not now come in Person; yet, as *David* sent his Servants to *Abigail, to commune with her*, and to acquaint her with his purpose and desire to *take her to Wife*, 1 Sam. 25. 39. So Christ sends us his Servants, his Ministers, to poor Sinners to commune with them, and to declare the love and purposes of his Heart towards them, and to woo them for him; and, as *Ambassadours for Christ*, we do woo poor Souls; and *as in Christs stead, beseech them to be reconciled to God*, to give up their Names and Souls to Christ in a Marriage Covenant, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. And because we can prevail nothing by and of our selves upon the Spirits of Men in this great Matter, Christ over and above, sends his own blessed Spirit to woo them, and gain upon them, making them *willing in the day of his Power*, Psal. 110. 3 And this leads me to the consideration of those other Acts of Grace in this business, wherein the Father and Jesus Christ work by the Spirit, in us and upon us, for the making up of the Match between Christ and us: Only, by the way, let us still see and admire

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the Grace of Jesus Christ to poor Sinners: O that he should woo such poor vile Creatures as we are, and make love to us! Should you see a King, a great King, wooing a Beggar, coming now himself in Person, and then sending his Servants to her to sollicit and importune her love, you would look on this to be great Grace: but O this is nothing to the Grace of Christ, in condescending to woo such as we are, Sinners, lying in our Blood.

CHAP. V.

Which gives an account of those (which I call) more near Acts of Grace, which the Father, and Jesus Christ by the Spirit, do put forth in us and upon us, for the effecting of the Espousals between Christ and us.

DIvine Grace has not yet done its Work; no, there are other Acts which it does, and must put forth, if ever the Marriage be made up between Christ and us; and these I call more near, because they are wrought in us and upon us, and do more immediately conduce to the tying of the Marriage knot between Christ and the Soul: And as in the former, the Father and Jesus Christ wrought more immediately of and by themselves; so in these the blessed Spirit's influence comes in, and his Grace shews it self, they in these acting by him; and the truth is, the March is all this while but half made: but now God comes, and by his

his Spirit working in and upon the Soul, carries on, and compleats it: which he does by these five Acts of Grace.

I. The Soul is, by the Spirit of God, divorced from its old Husband, the Law, and thereby is fitted and prepared for an Espousal to Christ. Naturally we are all married to another Husband, even to the Law; and we must be divorced from that, or we can never be married and espoused to Christ: So much the *Apostle* clearly holds forth, Rom. 7. 4. *Wherefore, my Brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the Body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the Dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* Pray mark, *married to another*; the Law then was their Husband, to which they were married; and that they must be dead to, and divorced from, if ever they would be married to Jesus Christ: Look, says he, (for 'tis his own Argument and Allusion in *v.* 2, 3.) as a Woman can't be the Wife of two Husbands at once; but her present Husband must be dead before she can be married to another: so neither can a Soul be espoused to these two Husbands at once, the Law and Christ, but he must be dead to, or divorced from the one, e're he can be married to the other: Observe, *ye are dead to the Law:* What is it to be dead to the Law, or divorced from the Law? To be dead to the Law, is to have no hope, no expectation of Life and Righteousness by the Law: 'tis to be sensible, that the Law cannot save us; yet there is more in it than so. To be dead to the Law, is to see our selves dead by the Law, 'tis to see our selves lost and condemned by the Law, for sin, as the transgression thereof; and thus we must all be dead to the

the Law, or divorced from the Law, or we cannot be married to Chriſt. Now this the Spirit of God effects by a work of the Law upon the Conſcience: He divorces the Soul from the Law by the Law, *i. e.* by bringing home the Law to the Conſcience: This the *Apoſtle* felt in his own Soul, *I through the Law* (ſays he) that is, the Spirit of God bringing hom the Law to my Conſcience, *am dead to the Law*, Gal. 2. 19. So again, *Rom.* 7. 9. *I was alive without the Law once: but when the Commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.* I was alive without the Law once, that is, I thought my ſelf to be alive, I apprehended my ſtate to be good and happy; but this was without the Law, *i. e.* before the Spirit of God, by the miniſtry of the Law, convinced me of my ſin and miſery; therefore it follows, when the Commandment came, ſin revived, and I died; *i. e.* when the Law came in its convincing Power through the Spirit upon my Soul, then I ſaw my ſinful, dead, and miſerable ſtate: thus was he himſelf divorced from the Law, that he might be married to Chriſt. The ſum is this, the Spirit of God comes and ſhews the Soul the ſtrictneſs and holineſs, the purity and ſpirituality of the Law, and makes him ſenſible how large the Duty is that it requires; how impoſſible it is for him to keep it, and how many ways he has broken it; he withal lets him ſee the dreadfulneſs of that curſe and condemnation it has juſtly laid him under for the breach thereof; and thus he is divorced from it: and this is all one with the Spirit's convincing us of ſin, and our loſt and miſerable condition by reaſon thereof, which is (you know) his firſt Work in order to Faith, and ſo to our eſpouſing to Chriſt, *John* 16. 8. Thus by the Spirit of God the Soul

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is divorced from the Law, he is taken off from all expectations of life and happineſs, by that, and is made to ſee his own ſinfulneſs, and ſo his infinite need of Chriſt, whereby he is fitted for this other and better Husband.

II. The Soul being thus divorced from the Law, and ſo fitted and prepared for Chriſt, then the Spirit of God reveals and offers the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the promiſe of the Goſpel, as a better Husband to him: Now the Bleſſed Spirit comes, and does as *Abrahams* Servant did, who was ſent to take a Wife for *Iſaac*; he told *Rebeca of his Maſters Greatneſs, of his Flocks, and his Herds, his Silver and his Gold, his Men ſervants and his Maid-ſervants*, and withal, *that he had given all to* Iſaac, Gen. 24. 35, 36. So the Spirit of God now ſets before the Soul the Riches and the Greatneſs, the Beauty and the Excellency of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: he tells him what a full, what a ſweet, what a rich, what an amiable one he is, and withal, tenders him to his embraces: he reveals and offers him to him, as one full of Grace and Truth, as one that has all fullneſs dwelling in him, all fulneſs of Life and Peace, of Righteouſneſs and Salvation, as one every way able to ſave him to the very utmoſt, which is that which Chriſt calls his *convincing the World of Righteouſneſs*, John 16. 9. he reveals and offers him to him in the tranſcendent Beauty, Excellency and Amiableneſs of his Perſon on the one hand; as alſo in the glorious fulneſs, largeneſs, and ſufficiency of his Grace and Righteouſneſs on the other hand: Thus (I ſay) he reveals and offers Chriſt unto the Soul, and withal, opens his Glory, and cauſes it to ſhine forth before him; ſo that now the Soul ſees that

in Christ, that fulness, that beauty, that love, that amiableness, that sweetness, which he never saw before; Christ is now another thing in the Souls eye than ever before he was: Now the Soul, as those, *John* 1. 14. *Behold his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten Son full of grace and truth*: Yea, not only does he thus reveal Christ unto the Soul, but withal fixes the Souls eye upon him; he makes him to pore and gaze upon Christ, as the most excellent and amiable Object, and as one infinitely needful for him; and this is called *a seeing of the Son*, and that in order to believing; *whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall have everlasting life*, John 6. 40. The Blessed Spirit deals by the Soul herein, as God, by the Angel, did with *Hagar*, Gen. 21. 19. Where 'tis said, *He opened her eyes, and she saw a Well of Water for her relief*: She was in a very distressed condition, as you may see, *ver.* 15, 16. full of bitterness, she and her Child both in a perishing condition, being in the Wilderness; and her Water in the Bottle being spent: Now God shews her a Well of Water, whence she fetches a full supply. So here, the poor soul having been under the convincing power of the Law, sees himself in a woful, miserable, distressed condition; whereupon he is full of bitterness, crying out with *Hagar*, *How shall I see the Child die?* How can I bear it to perish eternally? But now the Spirit of God comes, and opens his eyes, and shews him Christ, and Christ as infinitely sutable to him: Look, says the Spirit to the Soul, being now desolate and undone; look, here is a Saviour for thee, a Husband for thee, another and better a Husband than the Law could ever have been, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who is infinitely able to pay all thy Debts, to supply

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all thy Wants, to heal all thy Wounds, to relieve all thy Distresses, to pardon all thy Sins, to satisfie all thy Desires, to answer all thy Love, and to give thee perfect happiness and satisfaction in and with himself for ever: Look here he is, here he is in the promise, here he is in the Covenant, here he is in the Tender and Invitation of the Gospel; here he is at the very door of the heart, knocking and calling for admission thereunto, *Rev.* 3. 20. Here he is with his Arms wide open to receive and embrace thee; and that notwithstanding all thy vileness, sinfulness, and unworthiness: Look therefore to him and be saved.

III. With this Tender and Revelation of Christ unto the Soul, the Spirit of God comes and works a secret love and longing in the Soul after Christ; he does not make a naked tender and revelation of Christ only to the Soul; for that were not enough, but he withal gives him a secret touch, whereby he is made to breath and long after Christ, to move a little Christ-ward; *He drops a little Myrrh upon the handle of the Lock*, as it were, whereby he is drawn out in holy Longings and Breathings after sweet Jesus; as you know the case sometimes was with the Spouse, *Cant.* 5. *beg.* and this the Scripture calls an hungring and thirsting after Christ, and has a blessedness annext to it, *Mat.* 5. 6. and frequently elsewhere. Yea, such is that secret touch, which in and with those tenders and revelations of Christ, the Spirit of God gives the Soul, as that (like that of the Loadstone to the Needle) which sets it a trembling, and will not suffer it to rest, till it stands fully pointed Christ-ward; yea, till it finds it self in the very bosom and embraces of that

that Beloved; 'tis indeed ſuch as by degrees makes the Soul *ſick of love and longings after Chriſt*, Cant. 5. 8. and he cries out for Chriſt, as *Rachel* ſometimes did for children; *Give me children* (ſaid ſhe) *or elſe I die*: So give me Chriſt, ſays the Soul, or elſe I die, I periſh, and that for ever: In a word, nothing but Chriſt will ſatisfie him; ſend him to the creatures, ſend him to his own duties and ſervices, ſend him to his higheſt accompliſhments and attainments, and without Chriſt they will not do; yea all theſe he accounts *but as dung, as dogs-meat, that he may win Chriſt* Phil. 3. 8. Indeed, Heaven and Earth, with all the fulneſs of both, are nothing to him without Chriſt, and an union with Chriſt: his language now is, O Chriſt, Chriſt above ten thouſand Worlds! O that Chriſt were mine! O that I had union with him! O that I were in his embraces! O how happy are they that are married to him! and how happy ſhould I be, could I call him mine! This I ſay is his language, and when once it comes to this, then things work well indeed, then the Match is in a good forwardneſs, there being but an hairs breadth, as it were, between Chriſt and the Soul. Therefore,

IV. The Soul being thus inclined Chriſt-ward, and drawn forth in holy Longings after Union and Communion with him; the Spirit of God comes and enables him to believe, he carries the Soul to Chriſt in a way of Believing, whereby, he actually cloſes with him, and is Eſpouſed unto him: For, my Beloved, 'tis Faith which ties the Marriage-Knot, and makes up the Marriage-Union between Chriſt and us. Hence Chriſt is ſaid *to dwell in our hearts by Faith*, Epheſ. 3. 17.

Chriſt's

Christ's dwelling in our hearts, notes the neareſt Union and Communion between him and us. And how comes he thus to dwell in our hearts? why, by Faith, by our believing on him: Hence alſo Chriſt tells us, That *he that eateth his fleſh, and drinketh his blood, dwelleth in him, and he in him*, John 6. 56. By eating Chriſt's Fleſh and drinking his Blood, is meant, our believing on him; and ſo he himſelf expounds it; for he makes eating and drinking of him, and believing on him, all one through-out that Chapter: Now (ſays he) *He that eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him*; that is, he has the neareſt Union and Communion with me. 'Tis Faith then (you ſee) that Unites, and ſo Eſpouſes us to Chriſt: Faith gives Chriſt an inlet into the Soul, and it gives the Soul an inlet into Chriſt, and ſo they are made one, and Married together. By believing, we conſent to take Chriſt, and actually do take him for our only Head and Huſband for ever; and ſo the Match is made up between him and us: *We by Faith* (ſays the Learned Man) *wrought in us by the holy Spirit, by conſent unto this marriage with Chriſt*: Chriſt, as you heard before, conſents thereunto; as God he conſented hereunto from all eternity, and as Man he conſents hereunto in time. For, as Divines obſerve, Chriſt hath a double Will, his Divine and Humane: with the firſt, he conſented to this Eſpouſal from eternity; with the ſecond, he conſents hereunto in Time, and never changes therein. Now, as Chriſt gives his conſent, ſo we muſt alſo give ours, which we do by believing in him; by which therefore the Match is made up between him and us. Now, there is a three-fold Act of Faith, which the Spirit of God works in the Soul, whereby

by he more eſpecially cloſes with Chriſt, and is Eſpouſed unto him, made one with him in a Marriage Covenant.

I. An Act of Choice or Election.

II. An Act of Truſt or Dependance.

III. An Act of Reſignation or Subjection.

I. An Act of Choice or Election: In the Act or Work of Believing, the Soul is by the Spirit of God made ſolemnly and deliberately to chuſe Chriſt as his only Head and Husband, his Lord and Saviour, being thus offered to him in the Goſpel. Choice or Election, as the School-men tell us, is an Act of the Will, whereby it pitches upon ſome one thing, and prefers that before all others in order to ſuch or ſuch an end: Accordingly we may conceive of this Act of Faith we are ſpeaking of: It lies thus; the Will is by the Spirit of God ſweetly and powerfully determined upon Chriſt, preferring him for an Head and Husband, a Lord and Saviour before all others: It ſingles him out, as it were, from all others, whether perſons or things, in Heaven and Earth, and embraces him as the beſt Husband, the beſt Saviour, the beſt Lord: There are others which make love to him, and tender themſelves to his embraces, as Sin, Self, the Law, the World with its enticements; but he paſſes by all, yea, rejects all with loathing and indignation, and pitches upon Chriſt as infinitely beſt, ſaying to him, *I will have none in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I deſire in compariſon of thee.* This the Scripture calls ſometimes *a laying hold upon Chriſt*; Prov 3. 18. Sometimes *a receiving* or embracing *of Chriſt*, Joh. 1. 12. 'Tis true, in the Work of Faith, Chriſt is and muſt be received into the underſtanding, but he is moſt properly ſaid to be received into our

Will and Affections: Christ in the Gospel is revealed and offered to the Soul with all his Riches, Fulness, and Perfections; he is tendered to him, as a full, a mighty, and uttermost Saviour, as one who has not only an infinit fulness and sufficiency in him to redeem and save, but also an iufinit suitableness and amiableness in him to endear and delight the Soul; and accordingly the Soul accepts and embraces him, he cleaves to him, and fastens upon him, resolving to have none but him alone: his language of him now is, There is none like Christ, no Head like this Head, no Husband like this Husband, no Saviour like this Saviour for my Soul: This is the Head, the Husband, the Saviour that I need, and that indeed my Soul desires. No love like this Love, no beauty like this Beauty, no blood like his Blood, no righteousness like his Righteousness, no fulness like his Fulness; He therefore, and he alone shall be my Head, my Husband, my Saviour, and my all for ever. Sweet Jesus (says he) dost thou tender thy self for an Head and Husband to me, and art thou willing to be embraced by me? Lo, then I do with my whole Soul accept of thee, and that for all times, and in all conditions, with all thine Holiness as well as thy Love, with all thy Inconveniences as well as thy Priviledges; to suffer for thee, as well as to reign with thee; and this the Soul does upon the deepest Counsel, and most mature deliberation; and accordingly he abides by his choice for ever.

II. An Act of Trust or Dependance: As in the Work of Faith the Soul is, by the Spirit of God, made to chuse Christ; so also to trust and depend upon him for all Grace, Righteousness, and Salvation: Now it bottoms upon Christ, anchors upon Christ, rests and relies upon Christ for all

all Life and Peace, for all Grace on Earth, and Glory in Heaven: He lays the whole weight and ſtreſs of his Salvation upon him: He commits all to him, ventures all upon him, expects all from him; This the Scripture calls ſometimes *a truſting in Chriſt*, Eph. 1. 13. ſometimes *a leaning upon Chriſt*, Cant. 8 5. ſometimes *a hoping in Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 15. 19. And in this reſpect Chriſt is called *our Hope*, 1 Tim 1. 1. our Hope, that is, the object of our Hope and Truſt, as to life and Salvation. The Soul has no hope in himſelf, no hope in the Creature, no hope in the Law or firſt Covenant, no hope in any thing in Heaven or Earth on this ſide Chriſt: He looks here and there, to this and that, but he can find no ſolid ground of hope, no bottom to build or reſt upon for Life and Salvation; but then he turns his eye upon Chriſt, and there he ſees abundant ground of hope; he beholds him upon the Croſs, and there's hope; he beholds him upon the Throne, and there's hope; he looks upon him dying, and there's hope; he looks upon him riſing, aſcending, ſitting at the Fathers right hand making interceſſion for us, and there's hope; He looks upon the infinite vertue of his Blood; the infinite efficacy of his Spirit, the infinite fulneſs of his Grace, the infinite demenſions of his Love, the infinite freeneſs and faithfulneſs of his Promiſe; and in theſe he ſees infinite ground of hope and truſt, and accordingly he rolls and ventures all upon him: Here I'll build, (ſays he) here I'll bottom, here I'll reſt, here I'll hang and depend, here I'll live; yea, and if die I muſt, here I'll die. His language to Chriſt now, is like that of the *Pſalmiſt* to God in another caſe, *Pſal.* 39. 17. *Now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* This is to *caſt Anchor within the Veil*, Heb. 9. 6. And indeed

'tis with poor Souls many times, as with Perſons at Sea; the Storm ariſes, the Waves lift up themſelves, which beating upon them, they are ready to ſink every moment, and their very Soul is melted becauſe of heavineſs; but anon they ſound bottom, caſt Anchor, and are at reſt: So poor Souls are under ſtorms of ſin, guilt, and wrath, periſhing in their own apprehenſion every moment; but anon they drop an Anchor of hope upon Chriſt, and do reſt upon him: or 'tis with them in this caſe, as 'twas with the Dove when ſhe was firſt ſent out of the Ark, ſhe found no reſting place abroad for the Sole of her foot; but at length returned to the Ark, and there found reſt, *Gen.* 8.8,9. So the poor guilty Soul finds no reſt any where but in Chriſt. His language in this Act of Faith is ſuch as this, I am a poor, loſt, ſinful, diſtreſſed Creature, and there is but one door I can expect relief from, and that is Chriſt, and at this door I'll lie and wait; I know he is able to help me, for he can ſave to the uttermoſt: and ſurely he hath bowels, great bowels towards poor ſinners; he is a merciful High-Prieſt. He ſays concerning him, as they ſometimes did concerning the King of *Iſrael*, *Behold, we have heard, that the King of Iſrael is a merciful King peradventure he will ſave us:* yea he has bid me look to him and be ſaved; and he invites all them that are weary, and heavy-laden, to come to him, and promiſes them reſt: Why then ſhould I not reſt and rely upon him? 'Tis true, I am a mighty ſinner, but he is a more mighty Saviour Have I ſinned to the utmoſt? he has ſatified to the utmoſt: What ſhall I ſay? True, I am Death, but Chriſt is Life; I am Darkneſs, but Chriſt is Light; I am Sin, but Chriſt is Holineſs; I am Guilt, but Chriſt is Righteouſneſs; I am Empti-

Emptineſs and nothingneſs, but Chriſt is Fulneſs and Sufficiency; I have broken the Law, but Chriſt has fulfilled the Law; and his Life is infinitely able to ſwallow up my Death; his Light, my Darkneſs; his Holineſs, my Sin; his Righteouſneſs, my Guilt; his Fulneſs, my Emptineſs; on him therefore I'll lean, and live, and hope. 'Tis true, I am utterly unworthy of any Life, any Grace, any Favour; but Chriſt does all for Sinners freely, he loves freely, he pardons freely, he ſaves freely; how vile therefore and unworthy ſoever I am, yet I will reſt and depend upon him: who knows but he may caſt an eye of love upon me? This is that Act of Faith which is held forth, *Iſa.* 45. 24. *Surely, ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* I have neither ſtrength nor righteouſneſs of my own, but I have all righteouſneſs and ſtrength in Chriſt; all righteouſneſs for Pardon and Juſtification, and all ſtrength for Holineſs and Sanctification: this is that the Apoſtle calls a *rejoycing in Chriſt Jeſus, having no confidence in the fleſh*, Phil. 3. 3.

To draw towards a concluſion of this Head: Which way ſoever the Soul looks on this ſide Chriſt, he meets with nothing but diſcouragement: If he looks to himſelf, there he ſees nothing but ſin and guilt, blackneſs and deformity; in his heart he ſees a Fountain of ſin, an Abyſs of ſin, a very Hell of ſin and wickedneſs; in his Life he finds innumerable evils, ſins of a crimſon die and ſcarlet tincture ſtaring him in the Face; yea, his very Duties are not without ſin, even in theſe there is abundance of pride, formality, unbelief, and the like: his very *righteouſneſs are as filthy rags*, Iſa. 64. 4. If he looks unto the Law, there he reads his doom and condemnation in every line thereof; there he finds himſelf under the Curſe; there he

ſees nothing but *fear, and blackneſs, and darkneſs, and Tempeſts*, Heb. 12. 18. If he looks to Juſtice, that he finds as a flaming Sword keeping him from the tree of Life, from all happineſs: That appears with an angry frowning countenance, demanding ſatisfaction, as being infinitely wronged: But now in the midſt of all theſe diſcouragements, the poor Soul at length gets a ſight of Chriſt, in whom he ſees encouragement after all: He diſcovers land in a ſtorm, as it were, and finds in him a bottom to reſt his weary Spirit upon; in him he ſees that which can attone God, ſatisfie Juſtice, anſwer all the demands of the Law, fully deliver him from ſin and guilt, and make him both holy and happy for ever; and accordingly he reſts and rolls himſelf upon him, reſolving that if he dies, he will die thus leaning upon this Beloved.

III. An Act of Reſignation or Subjection: As in the work of Faith the Soul thus chuſes Chriſt, and depends upon him, ſo alſo he is by the Spirit of God made cordially and unreſervedly to reſign up himſelf unto him, to be ruled, governed, and diſpoſed of by him in his own way: The Soul now puts himſelf out of his own power and poſſeſſion, he paſſes himſelf away for himſelf, and he gives up himſelf into the power and poſſeſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, to be ruled, governed, and ſaved by him as he ſees good: which is properly that Act of Faith which we call Reſignation, and this the Scripture often mentions, *One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's*, Iſa. 44. 5. that is, he ſhall give or reſign up himſelf to the Lord to be for ever his, and at his diſpoſe: ſo 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. *They gave themſelves unto the Lord*: and *Epheſ.* 5. 24. the Church is ſaid to be *ſubject to Chriſt*: The caſe ſeems to be this, there having many Treaties paſt in order to a Match

between

between Chriſt and the Soul; the Soul a length through the help of the Divine Spirit, is made freely to conſent to take Chriſt for his only Head and Husband, & to be ſubject to him in all things, to be perfectly and eternally at his diſpoſe. His language now to Chriſt, is like that of *Ahab* to *Benhaddad*, 1 Kings 20.4. *Behold, I am thine, and all that I have is thine:* Sweet Lord Jeſus, ſays the Soul, I have been my own, and have lived too much in mine own will, and to my own ends and intereſts; but now I deſire to be thine, and to live in thy will, and to thine ends; take poſſeſſion of me; ſave me, rule me, lead me, diſpoſe of me as thou pleaſeſt; do all thy pleaſure in me, pull down and ſet up what thou wilt, I'le be, and do, and ſuffer what thou wilt have me to be, and do, and ſuffer. And this is properly that Act of Faith, whereby we cloſe with Chriſt as a Lord and King, and is indeed the evidence of the truth of the two former; for you muſt know, that tho Faith's firſt Aſpect be to Chriſt as a Saviour, yet it comes to eye him as a Lord and King alſo. As Faith fully bottoms upon the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, ſo it freely bows to the Scepter of Chriſt; yea, when Faith can't challenge Chriſt as a Saviour, yet it will own Chriſt as a Lord. You know how *Laban* ſpake to *Abraham*'s Servant upon the ſight of the Ear-rings and Bracelets which he had given his Siſter *Rebekah*, and upon his hearing a relation from her of his Diſcourſe with her, *Come in, thou bleſſed of the Lord, why ſtandeſt thou without? I have room for thee*, Gen. 24.31. In like manner does the Soul ſpeak to Chriſt, upon the ſight of that worth that is in him, and that need which he has of him; Come in, thou bleſſed of the Lord, come in thou bleſſed of the Lord, why ſtandeſt thou without?

I have room for thee in my Underſtanding, and in my Will and Affections; and I would have thee poſſeſs all, and command all: In a word, the Soul freely gives up himſelf to Chriſts Holy and Spiritual Government. Thou art an holy Chriſt (ſays he) he who is to reign, and I reſign up my ſelf to thee, I will have no Lord but thee; take the whole Throne to thy ſelf within me; I know thy Yoke is an eaſie Yoke, and I deſire to bear it; thy Scepter is a righteous Scepter, and I deſire to bow to it; thy Kingdom is a Kingdom of Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and I heartily deſire to come under the power of it. I would be ſanctified as well as juſtified; I deſire thy Spirit to ſubdue my corruptions for me, and to make me holy, as well as thy Blood to waſh away my guilt for me, and ingratiate me with thy ſelf: and this is what the Scripture calls, *an opening of the Gates, and lifting up of the everlaſting Doors, to let Chriſt the King of Glory in*, Pſal. 24. 7. Thus by theſe three, which indeed are the great uniting Acts of Faith, the Spirit of God enables the Soul to cloſe with Chriſt in a Marriage Covenant and Relation.

5. The Soul being thus enabled to believe, and ſo cloſe with Chriſt in a Marriage-covenant; then, as the Crown and Perfection of all, the bleſſed Spirit of God takes up his abode, and dwells for ever in that Soul, as the Pledg and everlaſting Bond of this Marriage-Union and Relation between them. The ſweet Spirit does not only come as a Friend, to treat about the Match, and alſo to tie the Marriage-Knot between Chriſt and us; but moreover, this being done, he remains himſelf in the Soul, as a Love-token from Chriſt to him, as the Pawn and Pledg of this Eſpouſal, and

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as the everlaſting Bond and Confirmation of this Marriage-union and Relation: Hence that of the Apoſtle, *He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit.* 1 Cor.6.17. one Spirit with the Lord he is joined to; that Spirit which did join him to Chriſt, does remain in him and in Chriſt both: Chriſt leaves his own Spirit in his Spouſes as the Pledg and Bond of that Marriage-union that is between him and them: ſo that he and they have the ſame Spirit dwelling in them; yet with this difference, he dwells in Chriſt without meaſue, in us by meaſure; in Chriſt immediately, by vertue of the perſonal Union, in us by his Gifts and Graces; in Chriſt as an Head, in us as Members, and he with theſe are the Love-tokens, the Pawns and Pledges of his Marriage-troth plighted between Chriſt and us; and this indeed is that which makes this union ſo ſtrong and inviolable, as that it can never be broken: Yea, not only does he remain in the Soul as the Pledg and Bond of this Union, but alſo tō deck and adorn the Soul with Grace, and to make him ready for the conſummation of the Marriage above: you know, when *Abraham's* Servant ſaw that *Rebekah* conſented to be *Iſaac's* Wife, he then gave her *Jewels of Silver, and Jewels of Gold, and Rich Raiment*, Gen.24.53. So the bleſſed Spirit of God, having gained the Souls conſent to be eſpouſed to Chriſt, and the Marriage-Knot being tied between them, now he dwells in the Soul to deck and adorn him; now he gives him Jewels of Gold and Silver, furniſhes and beautifies him with all Divine and Heavenly Graces: He dwells in him as an indeficient Spring and Fountain of all Grace and gracious Diſpoſitions, till he has lodged him ſafe in the Arms and Boſom of his ſweet Husband above. Thus at length the

Eſpouſal, or Marriage-relation is made up between Chriſt and the Soul: And O how bleſſed is the Soul that is thus eſpouſed to him! I muſt ſay to ſuch a Soul, Bleſſed be the day that ever thou wert born; bleſſed the Womb that bare thee, and bleſſed the Paps which gave thee ſuck; bleſſed Goſpel which revealed this ſweet Chriſt to thee, and bleſſed Spirit that has tied this happy Knot between him and thee.

CHAP. VI.

Being a Call to, and Treaty with Souls, in order to an Eſpouſal between Chriſt and them.

WEll, and what is the meaning of all this? Surely it ſhould have a mighty influence upon the ſpirits of Men, to draw and allure them to Chriſt, to induce them at leaſt to look after an acquaintance with this bleſſed eſpouſal to him; and indeed I would take occaſion hence to treat with eternal Souls, in order to a Match between Chriſt and them; and O that I could do it effectually! Look, my Beloved, as *David* ſent his Servants to *Abigal* to commune with her, in order to his taking her to Wife, 1 *Sam.* 25. 39, 40. ſo has the Lord Jeſus ſent me, his poor unworthy Servant, to you this day to commune with you in order to the eſpouſing you to himſelf; and O that you would do in this caſe, as ſhe did in that, for *ſhe haſtned* ('tis ſaid) *and aroſe and went to* David, *and became his Wife*, ver. 42. O that you would all ariſe,

arise, arise out of your sins, arise out of your unbelief, arise out of your carnal security, and go to Christ, and become his Spouse: And not only so, but, as she did make hast in the business, close speedily with him in a Marriage-covenant, even to day: O blessed day, might I succeed as they did! How happy would it be for you! how comfortable for me! and how joyful for us all in the day of the Bridegroom's coming! Sirs, let me say, O that I might say of you, as *Paul* of his *Corinthians* here, *I have espoused you to one Husband, even to Christ:* And why should it not be thus? Why should you not rise and go with me to sweet Jesus, and be espoused unto him? Can you make light of all that Love, that Comfort, that Sweetness, that Happiness, that blessed Union and Communion, that Delight, Solace and Complacency of Soul which this Espousal carries in it? Or, is there any thing can make up the loss of these? Can Sin and the Creature afford any thing comparable hereunto? Surely there is more sweetness, more happiness, in one kiss of the mouth of this blessed Lord, in one embrace in his Bosom, one moments communion with him, than in all the delights of Sin and the Creature: If you doubt it, come and see. Experienced Souls will tell you, that one descent of love from Christ, one beam of the light of his Countenance, one turn with him in his Galleries, is infinitely beyond all earthly delight whatsoever. Again, can you be content to die, and perish eternally, rather than live, and be made happy in such a sweet and desireable way as this of being espoused to Christ is? A more sweet and desirable way of being made happy than this of an espousal to Christ, surely neither men nor Angels could ever have thought on: And can you,

X Cae goode – p. 172

O eternal Souls, be content to die, to periſh, to be damned and miſerable for ever, rather than be ſaved and made happy this way? If you get not Union with, and a Marriage relation to this ſweet Lord, you muſt die and periſh for ever; *Know you not* (ſays the Apoſtle) *that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be Reprobates?* 2 Cor. 13.5. If Chriſt be not in us, we are certainly Reprobates, we are rejected of God, and out of his Favour, and then ſurely we muſt periſh. Naturally we are all dead, all loſt, all condemned; *Judgment is come upon all Men to condemnation*, Rom. 5.18. and *we are all the Children of Wrath by nature*, Eph. 2.3. And if ever we be juſtified and ſaved, it muſt be by a Marriage-union and relation to Chriſt. *There is no condemnation* (ſays the Apoſtle) or, as the words are, nothing of condemnation *to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. 8.1. But, as is there implied, there is nothing but condemnation to them that are out of Chriſt Jeſus. Once more; Can you be content to be ſhut out from the Marriage at laſt for ever? Think of that Scripture, and bear the dread of it if you can, *Mat.* 25.10. *And they that were ready, went into the Marriage, and the door was ſhut*; ſhut againſt others who then would fain enter: To be ſhut out from the Marriage-Supper at laſt, is to be ſhut out from God, from Chriſt, from the Comforter, from all the Saints and Angels, from all Happineſs, yea, and from all hopes of happineſs for ever: and thus you muſt expect to be ſhut out from the Marriage at laſt, if you come not into an eſpouſal to him here. And can you bear it, think you? Can you be content to hear Chriſt ſay unto you at laſt, *Depart from me, depart?* You would have none of me on Earth, though I wooed and beſought you with Tears; and there-

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fore now you shall have none of me in Heaven: you might have been happy in a union and communion with me, and the arms of my Love were open to have received you, but you would not; therefore now *depart from me, I know you not:* And can you bear this? Besides, what is it that keeps your Soul from a close with Christ in this Marriage-relation? A vain world, a filthy Lust, a painful perishing Pleasure, a sensual Appetite: And are these better than Christ? Are these indeed things to be laid in the Ballance by you against Christ, yea, and to weigh down him in your values? O monstrous Stupidity? In short, Sirs, the matter I am treating with you about, is no trifle, 'tis of no less moment and importance to you than eternal Life or Death, eternal Salvation or Damnation comes to; your eternal All depends upon it, for you must live or die, be saved or damned eternally, according as you do, or do not close in with Christ in a Marriage-union and Relation here: Why then should you stand off from him? Yea, why should not this be the day of Espousals between him and you? Oh, be not shie, be not coy to Christ, but embrace his Love: surely his Arms are wide open to receive you, his Heart is upon you, and his desire is towards you; *Lift up therefore the everlasting Doors, and let this King of Glory in:* Give up your Names and Souls unto him for ever. Some of you are young, and have your Affections green and fresh: O that you would now go with me to sweet Jesus, and become his Spouse; you cannot love him, nor be married to him too soon: O, let him have your hearts before this World hath defiled and debauched them. Others of you are older, and have outstood the Calls and Offers of Christ long; yet lo, he once more tenders him-

see Part. iii. 5. b

himself to you: O now close with him, and all will be well yet. But for the better succeeding of this Treaty, I shall, in the managing of it, speak to three things. 1. I'll shew you what manner of Husband the Lord Jesus Christ is, and how he is qualified to render him desireable in that Relation. 2. I'll shew you what great things he does for all his Spouses. 3. I'll shew you how much his Heart is upon a Match with you. And now as *Abraham*'s Servant, when he was to get a Wife for *Isaac*, prayed, saying, *O Lord God of my Master* Abraham, *send me good speed this day*, Gen 24. 12. So would I upon the bended knees of my Soul pray, O Lord God, the God and Father of my Royal Master Jesus Christ, send me good speed this day, that I may win, through thy Grace, a Spouse for him.

CHAP. VII.

Which shews what manner of Husband Christ is, and how qualified for the endearing of him to Souls, and rendring him desireable in a Conjugal-Union.

WHat is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou dost so charge us? So the Daughters of *Jerusalem* spake unto the Spouse, *Cant.* 5. 9. In like manner may some say unto me; Who, or what is this Christ, that you do so press us to an espousal with him? What is there in him to render him desirable to us? Who, or what is he? Truly I can't tell, nor could I, had

had I the tongue of Men and Angels; and I am almoſt afraid to ſpeak of him, leſt I ſhould darken his Glory inſtead of diſplaying it: This I am ſure of He is (as one ſpeaks of him) Earths wonder, and Heavens wonder both; and has all that in him, and that in infinit eminency and perfection, that ſhould render him grateful and deſireable to Souls in a Conjugal-relation: Look therefore upon him, and view him a little, and ſee if there be any thing you can deſire in ſuch a Relation that is wanting in him. I'll lay this more fully before you in theſe following Particulars.

I. Are you for Dignity and Greatneſs? This goes far among men, and makes many a Match: for this, none like Chriſt, none ſo great, ſo glorious, ſo honourable as he: pray view him a little: as to his deſcent, *He came forth from God*, viz. by eternal Generation, and is the eternal Son of the eternal Father, *Joh.* 16. 28. View him in his Perſon, and there you will ſee nothing but greatneſs; for he is no other than God-man, and has all the excellencies of both Natures in one Perſon: he is *Emmanuel*, *God with us*, God in our Nature, *Mat.* 1.23. He is *God*, Heb. 1.8. *The true God*, John 5. 20. *The Great God*, Titus 2. 13. *The mighty God*, Iſa. 9. 6. *God over all, or the moſt high God*, Rom. 9. 5. *God equal with the Father*, having the ſame Divine Eſſence, and Eſſential Perfections in him, that the Father hath in him, *Phil.* 2. 6. *He is the brightneſs of his Fathers Glory, and the expreſs Character of his Perſon*; one in whom the whole Majeſty, Luſtre, and Glory of the Father ſhines forth; one, on whom the Father has engraven all his eternal Excellencies, *Heb.* 1.3. Some ſmall Beams and Rays of Gods Glory

Glory do ſhine forth in the Saints and Angels; but in Chriſt the Fulneſs, Luſtre, and Brightneſs of it appears. View him in his Office and Relation, with the Dignity that even here he is advanced unto: He is a King, a great King, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, Rev. 19. 6. *King of Saints*, Rev. 15.3. *King of Nations*, Jer 10.7. *King of Glory*, Pſal. 24.7. *He is the Head of all Principalities and Powers*; and 'tis their Glory that they have ſuch an Head, *Col.* 2. 10. *He is the Fellow of the Lord of Hoſts*, Zech. 13. 7. *He is the firſt born of God, higher than the Kings of the Earth*, Pſal. 89.27. *He is ſet down at Gods own right hand in heavenly places, far above all Principalities, and Powers, and Might, and Dominion*, Eph. 1. 20. *He is made higher than the Heavens*, Heb. 7. 26. Among all Perſons, and in all things, whether in Heaven or Earth, he has the preheminence, *Col.* 1.18. Such is his Greatneſs, that the whole Creation is bound to perform Homage and Worſhip to him, the Angels themſelves not excepted: *Let all the Angels of God worſhip him*, ſays the Father, *Heb.* 1. 6. & *Phil.* 2. 9, 10. *God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in Heaven, and things on Earth, and things under the Earth*; i. e. Angels as well as Men muſt perform worſhip to him: And indeed, a refuſal ſo to do, would turn Angels into Devils: He is beloved, feared, believed on, obeyed, prayed unto, praiſed, admired, and delighted in by all: He is to have equal honour from all with the Father; *All muſt honour the Son, as they honour the Father*, Joh. 5.23. what ſhall I ſay? He has the Sovereign Lordſhip and diſpoſal both of Grace and Glory in his hand, *The Son quickneth whom he will*, John 5.21. He ſays

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unto one, Live, and he lives; and to another, Live, and he lives, and the reſt of the dead live not: *He has the Keys of Death and Hell*, Rev. 1. 18. He has the Government of the whole World in his his Hand; *His Kingdom ruleth over all*, Pſal. 103. 19. He is in full poſſeſſion of a Kingdom over the whole Creation, *all Judgment being committed to him*, John 5. 22. And O how glorious is he in the whole of it! 'Glorious in his Throne, which 'is at the right hand of God, *Heb.* 1. 3. Glori-'ous in his Commiſſion, which is all power in Hea-'ven and Earth, *Mat.* 28. 18. Glorious in his Scep-'ter, which is a Scepter of Righteouſneſs, *Pſal.* '45. 6. Glorious in his Attendants, ten thouſand 'times ten thouſands of his holy Ones, even thou-'ſands of Angels, *Dan.* 7. 10. Glorious in his way 'of Rule, full of Grace and Sweetneſs towards his 'his People, full of Terror and Majeſty towards 'his Enemies, his Arrows being ſharp in their 'hearts, *Pſal.* 45. 5. And as he governs all now, ſo he will judg all at laſt; and all muſt ſtand or fall, live or die, be ſaved or damned for ever, according to what Sentence he ſhall paſs upon them, *Acts* 17. 31. *Rom.* 14. 10. O how great is this Lord! and how worthy to be embraced by us! O Sirs, will you deny ſo great, ſo glorious a Perſon, when he makes love to you? Should you ſee ſome great Prince wooing a Beggar in Rags upon the Dunghil, you would wonder to ſee her ſlight him, and make him wait time after time upon her: Why, there is an infinitely greater Perſon than the greateſt of Kings, that wooes you, and ſollicites you for your love: And will you yet be ſhie of him, and make him wait? Will you refuſe him? Then wonder at your own ſordid Ingratitude.

II. Are

II. Are you for Richers and Treaſures? This ſways with moſt: for this, none like Chriſt, he has riches as well as greatneſs to recommend him to you; *Riches and Honour are with me*, Prov. 8. 18. Yea, and his Riches are the beſt ſort; his are Spiritual Riches, *Treaſures in Heaven*, Matth. 6. 20. Riches of Life and Love, Peace and Pardon, Grace and Glory, Righteouſneſs and Salvation; Riches of Glory, and Riches in Glory: And O what poor things are the Riches of this World to theſe? His are *true Riches*, Luke 16. 11. The riches of this World are but painted riches, his are ſubſtantial riches. *I will cauſe them that love me to inherit ſubſtance*, Prov. 8. 21. The riches of this World are vain, *they are not*, Prov. 23. 5. But the riches of Chriſt have a reality in them: His are laſting and durable riches; *Riches and Honour are with me, yea, durable Riches and Righteouſneſs*, Prov. 8. 18. Worldly riches are periſhing and uncertain things, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. Now we enjoy them, but all of a ſudden they are gone and diſappear; but Chriſts are eternal riches for an eternal Soul. And as his riches are thus of the beſt ſort, ſo he has great abundance of them; his riches are boundleſs and unſearchable: *To me* (ſays *Paul*) *it is given to preach the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*, Epheſ. 3. 8. *He is Heir of all things*, Heb. 1. 2. All the Treaſures of Heaven and Earth are his: *He has all fullneſs dwelling in him*, Col. 1. 19. even all the fullneſs of the Godhead; whole God dwells in him; he has enough to ſupply all our wants, and to anſwer all our deſires. Do we want Grace? *He is full of Grace*, John 1. 14. Do we want Life? *With him is the Fountain of Life*, Pſal. 36. 9. Do we want Redemption, redemption from Sin, from Death, from Hell, from Wrath? *With him is plen-*

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teous Redemption, Pſal. 130. 7. Do we want peace? He gives Peace; *My peace I give unto you*, Joh. 14. 27. Do we want Righteouſneſs? *He has fulfilled all Righteouſneſs*, he is become the *Lord our Righteouſneſs*, Jer. 23. 6. Now will you reject this rich Lord? You are poor, and miſerable, and naked; and will you not embrace this Chriſt, tendering himſelf with all theſe Riches to you? O how juſtly then will you periſh for ever! O that there were ſome covetous Soul here this day, that would be taken with the Riches of Chriſt!

III. Are you for Bounty, for a noble and generous Spirit? That's deſirable in ſuch a relation, and takes much with many; for this alſo, none like Chriſt: He is a bountiful Lord, of a noble and generous Spirit, as well as rich: Many a Man has riches enough, but has a baſe, narrow, covetous Spirit; and ſo his Wife has little of them; but Chriſt has a noble, generous bountiful heart: He is not only rich, but he is alſo willing to lay out all his riches and treaſures upon his Spouſes: All the Treaſures of his Love and Grace, all the treaſure of his Righteouſneſs and Conſolation; He would have them abundantly filled, abundantly comforted, abundantly enriched for ever: What a generous Spirit towards them does he expreſs, *Cant* 5. 1. *Eat, O Friends; Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved*: As if he ſhould ſay, I have enough, infinitely enough for you, and I would have you to have enough, I would have you have your Souls full of all good: He would have them to have full Graces, full Joys, full Comforts, and full happineſs for ever. *Theſe things ſpeak I unto you*, (ſays he) *that your joy may be full*, John 15. 11. And again, *Aſk that you may receive, that your joy may be full*, John 16. 24. He wills them

them like happineſs with himſelf; like love and embraces in the Fathers Boſom, *John* 17. 24. 26. Like Grace and Holineſs, *John* 17. 22. O what a noble, generous, bountiful Heart has this ſweet Lord towards his Spouſe! Soul, ſhall it not draw and allure thee to him? Nothing will ſatisfie him leſs than their participating with him in his own Bleſſedneſs: Soul, if thou rejecteſt this bountiful Lord, know, that he has Treaſures of Wrath and Vengeance alſo, which he will plentifully pour out upon the for ever.

IV. Are you for Wiſdom and Knowledg? Wiſdom and Knowledg render a Perſon lovely and deſireable; 'tis indeed one of a Perſons higheſt excellencies and perfections: for this alſo none like Chriſt; *He is the Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. The infinit Wiſdom of the eternal God does ſhine forth in him and through him: Yea, *in him are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*, Col 2. 3. Which may be underſtood Actively as well as paſſively, he knowing all, as well as having all that is worth knowing in him; *He is the only wiſe God*, Jude 25. There is no true Wiſdom but in him, and there is no true Wiſdom to be had but by him, and from him; he is often in Scripture called *Wiſdom*, to note that infinite Wiſdom that is in him: He knows all Perſons and all things; he knows the Father, and that as he is known of him, *Joh.* 10. 15. He knows the Mind and Will of the Father; hence ſaid *to be in his boſom*, which is the place of Secrets, as well as Love, *John* 1. 18. He knows all his Fathers Counſels and Decrees, which have been of old touching the Salvation and Damnation of Man: Hence we read of *the Lambs Book of Life, and Names written therein*, Rev. 13. 8. He knows all the Works of God

God the Father; *The Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him whatſoever he doth*, John 5. 20. He knows the Attributes and Perfections of God, and he only, *Mat.* 11. 27. *Joh.* 4. 56. He knows the whole Word of God, being himſelf *the Word*, Joh. 1. 1. 'Tis obſerved by one, that the Angels themſelves do not know all the Word of God, but Chriſt does: And as he thus knows God, and the things of God, ſo alſo he knows Man, and the things of Man: *He knows all Men, and what is in them*, John 2. 24,25. He knows the State, the Spirits, the Frames, the Thoughts, the Ends, the Counſels, the Ways, the Wants, the Burthens, the Temptations of all. In a word; he is infinite in Wiſdom and Counſel, and he knows perfectly, as how to promote his own Glory, ſo how to defend, ſave, and comfort his Spouſes, and carry on their happineſs in the beſt way: O, who would not have ſuch an Husband! Soul, if thou reject him, know, that his Wiſdom will fight againſt thee; and he knows how to damn and deſtroy for ever.

V. Are you for Beauty? That takes with moſt; for this none like Chriſt: For Beauty and Comlineſs, he infinitely ſurpaſſes both Men and Angels. We read of *Moſes*, that he was *exceeding fair*; and of *David*, that he was *ruddy, and of a beautiful countenance*; and *Joſephus* reports of the one of them, that all that ſaw him, were amazed at, and enamoured on his beauty. O but what was their beauty to Chriſt's? Were their Beauty, and (with theirs) the beauty of Men and Angels put together, it would all be nothing to the Beauty of Chriſt: Not ſo much as the light of a Farthing-Candle is to the Light of the Sun at Noon-day: He is *Beautiful and Glorious*, Iſa. 4. 2. Was *Moſes* fair?

fair? Chriſt is infinitely more fair; *He is fairer than the Children of men*, Pſal. 45.2. And had you an eye to behold his Beauty, you could not but be amazed at it, and enamoured on it: Was *David* ruddy, and of a beutiful Countenance? See what the Spouſe ſays of Chriſt, *Cant.* 5. 10. *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt of ten thouſand*; which notes the perfection of his Beauty; and therefore ſhe concludes all with this, (having ſpoken of the Beauty of his ſeveral parts) *He is altogether lovely*, ver. 16. or he is all lovelineſs: as if he ſhould ſay, What do I do? there is no end of his beauty and aimiableneſs; there is nothing in him but what is lovely; and there is nothing lovely but what is in him; neither is there any thing in the whole Creation, that has beauty and aimiableneſs enough in it, to be a ſhadow and reſemblance of his beauty and aimiableneſs. *O fair Sun* (ſays *Rutherford*) *and fair Moon, and fair Stars, and fair Flowers, and fair Roſes, and fair Lillies; but O ten thouſand thouſand times fairer Lord Jeſus! Alas, I have wronged him* (ſays he) *in making the compariſon this way: O black Sun and Moon! but O fair Lord Jeſus! O black Flowers, and black Lillies and Roſes! but O fair, fair, even fair Lord Jeſus! O black Heaven! but O fair Chriſt! O black Angels! but O ſurpaſſingly fair Lord Jeſus!* In ſhort, Divines obſerve, that there is ſomewhat in Chriſt more aimiable than Salvation; and indeed there are thoſe Heart indearing Beauties, thoſe Soul-raviſhing Excellencies in the Perſon of this Beloved, that are unſpeakably beyond Salvation it ſelf: He is the brightneſs, the luſtre, the ſhining forth *of his Fathers Glory*, Heb. 1. 2. O, who would not be raviſhed with, and enamour'd on his Beauty? A ſmall ſight and report thereof, ſet the

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Daughters of *Jeruſalem* a ſeeking after him, *Cant.* 6. 1. And ſhall it have no influence upon you, to draw and allure you to him? Does one ſo fair and beautiful make love to ſuch black and deformed Creatures as you and I are, and ſhall we refuſe him? Shall we reject this lovely Lord? O that his Beauty might enamour us!

VI. Are you for Love as well as lovelineſs? for a ſweet, kind, loving Diſpoſition? This is deſirable to all; for this alſo none like Chriſt: He is of a moſt ſweet, loving, tender, affable Diſpoſition: He indeed is Love it ſelf, Kindneſs it ſelf, Tenderneſs and Compaſſion it ſelf: *God is Love*, 1 John 4. 16. His Love to his Spouſes, has all dimenſions, *heights*, *breadths*, *depths*, *lengths* in it; *yea*, *it paſſes Knowledg*, Epheſ. 3. 18, 19. which ſhews the immenſity and unmeaſurableneſs of his Love; as if he ſhould ſay of it, 'tis higher than Heaven, and deeper than the Sea; 'tis broader than the Orb of the Earth, and longer than all Time, during throughout Eternity; yea, and it paſſes Knowledg. There are two things which exceed our Knowledg; our Sins, and Chriſts Love; the one is almoſt, the other is altogether boundleſs and bottomleſs. Tho a Man has never ſo many accompliſhments to commend him; yet if he be of a rough, crabbed, ſour diſpoſition, this renders him unacceptable for ſuch a Relation: But to all his other Perfections, Chriſt has this added, That he is infinitely loving as well as lovely, and of a moſt kind, tender diſpoſition to his Spouſes. Hence we read in Scripture of his Love, his Kindneſs, his Meekneſs, his Gentleneſs, and the like; all noting the admirable ſweetneſs and amiableneſs of his Diſpoſition: He wept over his very Enemies, even them that finally refuſed

fused him, *Luk.* 18. 41, 42. Yea, he had a kindness for his Murderers, and prayed for them, and that whilst they were murdering of him; yea, and his Prayer carried many of them to Heaven, *Luke* 23. 34. O what love, what kindness then must he have for his Spouses? He that has love for Enemies, and such love, what must he have for his Friends? 'Tis a sweet gloss which one of the Ancients has upon the place last quoted; *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do:* 'This '(*says he*) is a Word becoming the eternal Word, 'the Word of the Eternal Father; he prays not 'only for his Persecuters and Reproachers, but 'even for his Murderers, improving all his inte-'rest in his Father for them; saying, in effect, 'Father, I intreat thee, by that fatherly love thou 'hast for me, and by which we are one, hear me 'for these my Murderers, in forgiving of them, 'own the love of thy Son, that thou mayest par-'don his Enemies. O what kindness does this argue! In a word, his love is as an Ocean, which has neither brim nor bottom; neither can he but be kind to his. *The Law*, indeed, *of kindness* (as 'tis said of the good Wife, *Prov.* 31. 26.) *is in his lips*; yea, and in his heart and carriage too, all being full of Love. O that his Love might draw you! Surely no love like his Love, none so full, none so free, none so sweet, none so fruitful, none so ravishing, none so lasting; his Love, where he loves, never fails, nor can it ever be broken off; *Who shall separate us* (says the Apostle) *from the Love of Christ?* That is, nothing can separate us from his Love, *Neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any thing else can do it*, Rom. 8. 35, 38, 39. And I think,

think, ſays an holy Man, his unchangeable love hath ſaid unto me, I deſie thee to break me, or change me. O Sirs, experienced Souls will tell you, how ſweet, and good, and rich Chriſt's Love is. They will tell you, one ſight, one taſte of it makes Heaven in the Soul, that *'tis better than Wine*, Cant. 1.2. And will you reject him and his love too? Will you pour contempt upon ſo much kindneſs? O how juſtly then will you periſh under his Wrath! He has Wrath in him as well as Love; Wrath for Enemies, as well as Love for his Spouſes; and his wrath is as hot and terrible, as his love is ſweet and comfortable, yea his Love will, if rejected by you, turn into Wrath, and no Wrath like that that is the reſult of abuſed Love: O therefore cloſe with Chriſt this day.

VII. Are you for a Perſon of Eſteem, one that is much valued and beloved? An ingenuous Soul would deſire this; and for this none like Chriſt: As there is none ſo kind and loving as he, ſo there is none ſo much valued and beloved as he: He is beloved by all whoſe Love is worth the having: He is highly valued and beloved by all the Saints, both in Heaven and Earth; the Saints in Heaven they admire and adore him; 'tis a part of their happineſs to love him and delight in him for ever: and the Saints on Earth, they love and value him above all others what-ever; he is the dearly Beloved of their Souls. How often does the Spouſe call him her Beloved, and her Well-beloved: And once and again, ſhe declares her ſelf ſick of Love to him; ſhe is enamour'd on him; he is indeed *the deſire of all Nations*, Hag. 2. 7. That is to ſay, He whom all the Faithful in all Nations do love, deſire, and delight in: Hence alſo that of the Apoſtle, *To you that believe he is precious*, 1 Pet. 2. 7. The Saints love and value

Chriſt above all their Natural, or Creature-enjoyments, above Father and Mother, Husband and Wife, and Children, Houſes and Lands, and the like; So much is intimated, *Mat.*10. 37. & 19. 29. they love and value him above all their ſpiritual Attainments, *Accounting them but Dung for Chriſt*, Phil.3.8. They love and value him above their Lives, being *ready to die for him*, Acts 21. 13. Rev. 12. 11. O how dear is Chriſt to Saints? he is alſo highly valued and beloved by all the holy Angels: He is the great Object of their Love and Admiration: Hence he is ſaid to be *ſeen of Angels*, that is, to be beloved and delighted in by Angels, 1 *Tim.*3.16. The bleſſed Angels do ſee that in Chriſt, which does enamour them on him, and fill them with love to him, and delight in him; yea, which does fill them with perpetual admirings and adorings of him, *Rev.*5. 12. Yea, which is more than all this, he is infinitely valued and beloved by God the Father alſo: The bleſſed God ſees that in Chriſt, that renders him infinitely amiable and deſirable in his eye, and to his Soul,; both as Son, and alſo as Mediator, he is even infinitely dear and precious to the Father: And as he is the Son of God, the Son of the Father, as the Apoſtles expreſſion is, ſo is he the Darling and Delight of the Fathers Soul, and was ſo from all Eternity; ſo much he himſelf tells us, *Prov.*8.30. So is he the infinite and eternal Favourite of the infinite and eternal Father; ſo he is one in eſſence with the Father, and accordingly muſt be infinitely dear to the Father. Hence he is ſaid *to be in the Fathers Boſom*, and as his Son, was ſo from eternity, *Joh.*1.18. Now the Boſom is the Seat of Love; and this being in his Fathers Boſom, notes that ſtrong, ardent, intimate Love which the Father has for him: yea, even as Mediator the Father loves him, *John* 3 35. Yea, he

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loves him with a choice, a ſingle, and an eminent Love, with a Love of the higheſt ſtrain, the choiceſt excellency, the ſweeteſt influence; a Love that has a ſtamp of ſpecial Glory upon it: Hence he is called *the Beloved*, Epheſ. 1. 6. *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved*, that is, in Chriſt, who is moſt dear to God: Hence God calls him *his beloved Son*, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, Mat. 3. 17. Yea, he is called the Son of his Love; *he hath tranſlated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son*; the Greek is, the Son of his Love, *Col.* 1. 13. Yea, the Father proclaims him to be the delight of his Soul: *Behold* (ſaith he) *my Servant whom I have choſen*; *mine Elect, in whom my Soul delighteth*, Iſa. 42. 1. What ſhall I ſay? God loves himſelf infinitely, and next to himſelf he loves Chriſt, and delights in him: 'tis true, he loves all the Works of his Hand as ſuch, eſpecially rational Creatures: and among them, he has a peculiar love for his Saints and the holy Angels; but he loves Chriſt unſpeakably more than all: He indeed is firſt Beloved, and moſt beloved, and beſt beloved by him, of all others. God, as the School-men obſerve, does love the very Fleſh or humane Nature of Chriſt, more than all the Angels: In a word, he loves him ſo, as that he is even raviſh'd with him, and he can't but love all that are in him, or related by Covenant to him; and that tho altogether unlovely in themſelves. Now, Sirs, will you not love and embrace this beloved One, one that is thus valued and beloved by Saints, by Angels, and by God the Father? And let me ſay, one that is hated and deſpiſed by none but Devils and deviliſh ones: Soul, if thou reject him, whom all the Saints and Angels love, admire and adore, then never expect to live with them in the fruition of them, but reckon upon living with Devils and damned Spirits in Hell for ever: If

thou reject him whom the Father loves and delights in, then expect to be rejected both by him and the Father for ever; but Soul, rather be prevailed with to love him too.

VIII. Are you for Immortality, for one that lives for ever? This added to the reſt, is deſirable; and for this, none like Chriſt: Yea, none but Chriſt, he, and he alone is a never-dying Husband; the beſt Husband here below is mortal, and may leave you in a moment; but Chriſt is immortal, *he is the King immortal, eternal*, 1 Tim. 1. 17. *and he only hath immortality*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. He, and He only lives for evermore: *Behold, I live for evermore*, (ſays he) Rev. 1. 18. He will never leave you in the deſolate ſtate of Widowhood; yea, not only does he live for ever himſelf, but moreover he makes all his Spouſes to live for ever too: So you find, *John* 11. 25, 26. *I am the Reſurrection and the Life*, (ſays he) *he that believeth in me, tho he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die.* O what an Husband is this! an Husband that lives for ever himſelf, and that makes his Spouſes live for ever too; he gives all his Spouſes ſuch a Life as never dies, an immortal Life. In a word, cloſe with him, and as he will live for ever as thy Husband, ſo thou ſhalt live for ever as his Spouſe: O who would not accept of ſuch a Perſon? Soul, if thou receiveſt him, know, he lives for ever, to love thee, to comfort thee, to delight thee, to make thee happy in and with himſelf; but if thou rejecteſt him, know, that he lives for ever to puniſh thee, to inflict wrath and vengeance upon thee, and to make thee compleatly miſerable; but O reject him not! Thus have I ſhewn you a little what an Husband Chriſt is to his Spouſes; and upon the whole, I would ſay to you, as the Spouſe did to the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, Cant. 5. 16.

5. 16. *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend*; This is he that offers himſelf to your Embraces; ſurely he is no mean, no deſpicable Perſon, but one infinitely deſirable. Now, what do you ſay? will hou have him, or will you not? poſſibly this is the laſt tender he will ever make of himſelf to you; poſſibly the Match muſt be made now or never; therefore now cloſe with him, accept him upon his own terms, who ſurely is worthy of all acceptation.

CHAP. VIII.

Which ſhews what great Things Chriſt does for all his Spouſes.

TRue, may ſome ſay, Chriſts Perſon is deſirable; but what will he do for his Spouſes? What may our Soul expect from him, in caſe we ſhould cloſe up with him in a Marriage-Covenant? What will he do? What will he not do for you? Surely he acts like himſelf, and does great things for all his Spouſes: And O happy, happy they that are indeed eſpouſed unto him! I ſhall, for the more effectual drawing of poor Souls to him, ſhew you what he does for his Spouſes, in theſe following particulars.

I. He pays all their Debts.
II. He ſupplies all their Wants.
III. He heals all their Maladies,
IV. He bears all their Buthens.
V. He ſweetens all their Afflictions.
VI. He ſubdues all their Enemies.
VII He minds and manages all their concerns.
VIII. Enjoynters them in Eternal Life and Glory.

I. He pays all their debts, fully diſcharging their Souls from all Sin and Guilt. No ſooner is a Woman married to her Husband, but preſently all her

Debts become his; he pays all, at laſt is lyable ſo to do: In like manner, no ſooner is a Soul eſpouſed to Chriſt, but all his Debts to Law and Juſtice become Chriſts, and he pays all: And O how great a thing is this? Friends, we are all in debt, deeply in debt to the Law and Juſtice of God: We owe each one of us more than our ten thouſand Talents, *Mat.* 18.24. We lie under whole Mountains of Sin and Guilt: The truth is, our firſt Father left us and all his Poſterity in debt; we brought Sin and Guilt into the World with us, and the firſt day we were born, Divine Juſtice might have arreſted us, and have caſt us into the diſmal Priſon of utter darkneſs. *I came of thoſe Parents* (ſays one of the Ancients) *who made me damned before I was born: they ſinners begot me a ſinner in their ſin.* And to the ſame purpoſe another of them ſpeaks, *No man is free from ſin* (ſays he) *in the ſight of God; no, not an Infant of a day old.* And to give you a greater Authority than theſe, the Holy Apoſtle aſſerts the ſame thing, *Rom.* 5.12. *By one man ſin entered into the World, and death by ſin; and death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.* *Adam* ſinned, and we all ſinned in him, we all being in him, as in a Common Head; and the guilt of the Act of this Sin is as truly ours, as if we had each one of us acted it in our own Perſons; and we all ſtand juſtly condemned for it. Hence alſo *verſ.* 18. he tells us, That *by the Offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.* Beſides, we have all contracted a vaſt debt upon our ſelves, and do lie under much actual guilt, and that of a ſcarlet dye and crimſon tincture. Alaſs, we have done little but ſinned ever ſince we came into the World; and indeed, as long as we are out of Chriſt, either all we do is ſin, or at leaſt we ſin in all we do: we are every day running upon new Scores, adding ſin to

ſin,

ſin, and guilt to guilt: And O how great then muſt our Debts to Law and Juſtice needs be? You look upon that man to be deeply in debt indeed, whoſe Debts are ſo many and great, as that he can neither know, nor count them. And thus it is with us, ſo many and ſo great are our ſins, and conſequently our Debts to Law and Juſtice, that we can neither know nor count them. *David*, though an holy Man, cries out, *Who can underſtand his Errors?* Pſal. 19.12. Alas, who of us can count the ſins of one day? They paſs our Knowledg; and which is worſe ſtill, we are under a neceſſity, whilſt in our Natural ſtate, of increaſing our ſin and guilt every day and hour. Now how ſhall all this debt be paid, this Sin and Guilt be expired and done away? Why only by Chriſt, cloſe with him in a Marriage-covenant, and your Souls are diſcharged from all. Juſtice that ſtands upon Satisfaction, it calls for full payment; its language is, Pay, or periſh; pay, or be damned: and nothing have we of our own to pay the leaſt of all our debts, nor can we poſſibly right God for the wrong we have done him by the leaſt Sin; and, which adds to our miſery, we are every day in danger of Arreſts, nor know we how ſoon Juſtice will by the hand of that grim Sergeant Death, clap an Arreſt upon us, and caſt us into Priſon, whence there is no redemption, until we have paid the utmoſt farthing, which can never be, *Mat.* 5.26. Now Sinner, wouldſt thou have thy Debts paid, thy Sins pardoned, and thy Soul freed from the danger of thoſe Arreſts? then give up thy ſelf to Chriſt in a Marriage Covenant: O this is the only way to diſcharge all. Chriſt ſays to Juſtice concerning all his Spouſes, as *Paul* ſometimes did to *Philemon* concerning *Oneſimus*; *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee any thing put that upon my account*: So

ſays Chriſt to God concerning thee immediately upon thy cloſe with him; Father, if this Soul hath wronged thee, and oweth thee any thing, place it on my account, I have taken all his Debts upon me, I'll be reſponſible to thee for all: Father, this Soul I bled and dyed for, this Soul I was made ſin and a curſe for, whereby thy Juſtice is fully ſatiſfied; let him therefore be diſcharged. O Soul, how ſhould this draw thee to Chriſt? Canſt thou be content to lie under ſo great a Debt? And is it a ſmall thing to thee to be in danger of ſo terrible an Arreſt as that of Juſtice, which we have ſpoken of, is? Suppoſe a Man owed ten thouſand pounds, and had nothing therewith to pay, and he ſaw himſelf in danger every moment of being caſt into Priſon; how ſad wouldſt thou look upon his caſe to be? and how gladly, thinkeſt thou, would he embrace an offer from any to diſcharge him from all? Soul, thy caſe is ten thouſand times more ſad, and how gladly ſhouldſt thou embrace the Lord Jeſus, who would, and who alone can diſcharge all for thee? In ſhort, we read of *Spirits already in Priſon*, 1 Pet. 3. 19. Juſtice has already clapt its Arreſt upon thouſands and ten thouſands, and lodg'd them in the Priſon of eternal darkneſs; and what canſt thou expect from it, but to be dealt with in the like manner ſpeedily, unleſs thou cloſeſt with Chriſt as thy Righteouſneſs, to make ſatisfaction for thee? His Righteouſneſs is ſuch as makes a full ſatisfaction, and is every way anſwerable to the ſtricteſt demands of Law and Juſtice; and by it, he being cloſed withal by thee, all thy Debts are paid at once.

II. He ſupplies all their wants, and makes bleſſed proviſion for them. 'Tis the part of an Husband to ſupply the wants of his Wife, and to make proviſion for her: And this Chriſt does for all his Spouſes; he

ſupplies

ſupplies all their needs according to his Riches in Glory: They have Wants, and he has Fulneſs; they have Needs, and he has Riches; and he brings his Fulneſs to their Wants, and freely communicates of the one to the other: Truly we are full of wants of all ſorts, Wants in the Soul, and Wants in the Body. *We are poor, and miſerable, and blind, and naked,* Rev. 3. 17. Yea, our Wants are ſuch, and ſo pinching upon us, that with the Prodigal we are even *periſhing with hunger*, Luke 15.17. Even the Saints themſelves are a *poor and needy people*, full of wants, *Iſa.* 41. 17. Now how ſhall theſe Wants be ſupplyed? Only by Chriſt, and do but cloſe with him, and he will ſupply all plentifully: Let it be but a day of Eſpouſals between Chriſt and you, and all your Wants are ſupplied for ever. The truth is, Chriſt is all; he is the great All, (as one calls him) Heaven and Earth, Time and Eternity, Grace and Glory are all in one Chriſt: He ſupplies the Spiritual Wants of his Spouſes: Do you want Life? *He that hath the Son, hath Life*, 1 John 5. 12. Do you want Grace? Cloſe with Chriſt and he will give you Grace, abundance of Grace, *John* 1.16. Do you want Peace? Cloſe with Chriſt and he will give you Peace, *John* 14. 27. Do you want Strength and Righteouſneſs, Righteouſneſs for Juſtification, and Strength for Sanctification and Obedience? Cloſe with Chriſt and he will ſupply you with abundance of both, *Iſa.* 45. 24. Do you want Joy and Conſolation? Cloſe with Chriſt, he will in due ſeaſon fill you with Joy and Conſolation, he will comfort your hearts, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 16,17. He ſupplies all the outward Wants alſo of his Spouſes, and that ſo as that they want no good thing, *Pſal.* 34. 10. They want no outward good thing; but what the want thereof is better for them, than the enjoyment of it would be: True,

they may, and often have but a little of outward Comforts; but yet then they have much in a little, much Love, much Blessing, much of Christ and the Covenant: And therefore *a little which they have, is said to be better than the riches of many wicked*, Psalm 37.16. Besides, wherein they are cut short in Temporals, Christ often makes it up to them in Spirituals: They are *poor in this World, but rich in Faith*, Jam. 2.5. They have not much of the Streams, it may be, but they have the more of the Fountain; more love, and the sweeter communion with Christ: In a word, whatever either Heaven or Earth affords, so far as they need it, they shall have it: *The Lord will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*, Psal. 84.9. O, who would not close with this Christ? Soul, why standest thou off from him? Is there any can supply thy Wants but he? Is there any can give thee Life, and Peace, and Pardon, and Righteousness, and Salvation, but he? Or hadst thou rather die in thy Wants, than come to this Fountain to be supplied? Hadst thou rather perish in thine one Poverty, than come to this Treasury to be enriched?

III. He Heals all their Wounds, and cures all their Maladies. He is a Physician to his Spouses, and such a Physician, as that tho the Wound be never so deep, and the Disease never so desperate, yet he never fails to work the Cure for them: O how should this allure us to him! We, my Beloved, have our Wounds, as well as our Wants, we are full of Maladies and Diseases of Soul: The truth is, *From the sole of the Foot, to the crown of the Head, there is no soundness in us*, Isa. 1.6. The Saints themselves have their Wounds, yea, *Wounds* many times that *stink, and are corrupt*, (as *David* speaks) *Psal.* 38.5. Indeed, they are apt to get fresh Wounds every day,

day, Wounds in their Grace, and Wounds in their Peace; Wounds in their Comforts, and Wounds in their Conſciences; Wounds that ſmart ſorely, and which many times bleed, as if they ſhould bleed to death of them: Well, but Chriſt heals all their Wounds; and do but cloſe with him in a marriage-Covenant, and he will heal all thine too, whoever thou art: He is that good *Samaritan* that has Oyl and Wine, his Blood and Spirit to pour into the Wounds of his People for the healing of them: *By his ſtripes we are healed*, Iſa. 53. 5. His Blood and Spirit are a ſovereign Balm, which can heal the deepeſt Wounds, and deadlieſt Diſeaſes: His Spouſes find it ſo, *He reſtoreth my Soul*, ſays *David*, Pſal. 23. 3. His Soul was ſubject to many Ails and Infirmities, but Chriſt reſtored him under all. Need we ſay, *Is there no Blalm in* Gilead? *Is there no Phyſician there*? ſurely there is. Indeed there is none but Chriſt and his Blood that can heal our Wounds. O Soul, why ſhouldeſt thou not cloſe with him, that thou mayeſt be healed? Do not thy Wounds ſtink? and are they not ready to rankle and gangreen? And unleſs Chriſt heals them for thee, muſt thou not unavoidably die of them and periſh for ever? Muſt thou not ſuffer a cutting off, a cutting off from God, a cutting off from Chriſt, a cutting, off from Heaven and all Happineſs for ever? and wilt thou ſuffer ſuch a cutting off? Wilt thou be content to die and periſh eternally, rather than come to Chriſt for healing?

IV. He bears all their Burdens: We are commanded to bear one anothers Burdens; eſpecially Husbands ſhould bear the Burdens of their Wives: And this Chriſt does, he bears all the Burdens of his Spouſes. Sirs, we all have our Burdens which we labour under, Burdens within, and Burdens without;

without; Burdens in the Flesh, and Burdens in the Spirit; Burdens that make us groan under them: *Being burdned, we groan*, says the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. *Burdens that are too heavy for us to bear*, as *David* complained his were, *Psal.* 38. 4. Burdens sometimes that make us a burden to our selves, as *Job* complains of himself, *Job* 7. 20. Yea, Burdens that make our very lives a burden to us: *My Soul is weary of my Life*, says *Job*, Chap. 10. 1. Now, how shall all these Burdens be born? Why, Christ will bear them all, he bears all the Burdens of all his Spouses; and if we will close with him in a Marriage-covenant, there shall not that Burden lie upon us, that he will not bear for us. He bears all his Peoples Burthens two ways.

1. In a way of Sympathy and Compassion: He weeps with all their Tears, and sighs with all their Groans: If they are troubled, he grieves; if they are wounded, he bleeds, in all things he bears the other end of the Burden; *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, Isa. 63. 9. He does, συμπαθῆσαι, suffer together with us: or (as the Apostle renders it) *he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, Heb. 4. 15. He is deeply sensible of all our Burdens, all our Sorrows: Such sometimes is the case with the Saints, that among Men they have none to pity them, and sympathize with them under their Burdens, as was *David's* case, *Psal.* 69. 20. But even then Christ bears the other end of the Burden, he pities them, and sympathizes with them, and that according to the weight of their Burden. And O how sweet is that? *No matter* (says an holy Man) *how heavy the Burden be, so long as Christ bears the other end of it.*

2. In a way of Succour and Corroboration: He does not only bear with them, but also gives them strength to bear, and stand up under the Burden:

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He puts his everlaſting Arms underneath him, Deut. 33. 27. And with the Promiſe of this he encourages them to caſt their Burdens upon him; *Caſt thy Burden upon the Lord, and he ſhall ſuſtain thee*, ſuccour and ſupport thee, *Pſal.* 55. 22. He ſtrengthens and ſuccours them, and that anſwerable to the weight of their Burden; He gives them great ſtrength for great Burdens, great ſuccours for great Temptations, and ſo makes good his promiſe to them, *not to ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. The poor Soul many times cries out, O, I ſhall ſink under the Burden, 'tis too heavy for me to bear: But, Soul, tho it be too heavy for thee; yet 'tis not too heavy for Chriſt to bear, and he bears with thee, and for thee: yea, he does not only bear, but in due time he bears away all their Burdens for them: There is not that Burthen lies upon any of his Spouſes, but he ſo bears it, as at laſt to bear it utterly away for them, ſo as they ſhould never need to groan under it more. He has already born the heavieſt Burden of all for them, even the guilt and puniſhment of their Sins; *He bare our Sins in his Body upon the Tree*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. And again, *He bare the Sin of many*, Iſa. 53. 12. And 'tis well for us that he hath born this Burden; for otherwiſe it muſt neceſſarily have ſunk and cruſht us for ever; we could never have ſtood under it: and as he has born this, ſo he bears, and in due time will bear away all for them. Are their Sins the iniquities of their holy things, a Burden to them? Theſe he bears away from them, *Exod.* 28. 38. Are the remainders of original Corruption a Burden to them? Theſe make them groan indeed; theſe in due time he bears away from them, *Rom.* 7 24, 25. Are their Conflicts and Temptations a Burden to them? Theſe lie heavy upon ſome, in due time he bears theſe away alſo; he turns their Con-

flicts

flicts into Triumphs: O how ſhould this comfort the hearts of Saints? And, how ſhould it draw and allure Sinners to him? O, Sirs, will you ſink under your Burdens, rather than have Chriſt to bear them for you? O be not ſo cruel to your own Souls!

V. He ſweetens all their Afflictions for them; Afflictions they may, and often do meet withal, many and great Afflictions. Chriſt tells us, *That in the World we ſhall have Tribulation*, John 16.33. But he ſweetens all for them; he turns their Wormwood into Wine, and therefore at the ſame time, with the ſame breath, he ſays, *In me ye ſhall have Peace*: As if he ſhould ſay, I will ſweeten all your Tribulations to you. Chriſt ſweetens his Peoples Afflictions to them, two ways:

1. By his Preſence with them, and the communications of his Love to them under their Afflictions: Chriſt has promiſed to be with his People, and to miniſter Comforts to them in their Afflictions; Iſa. 43.2. *When thou paſſeſt through the Waters, I'le be with thee; and through the Fire, it ſhall not burn thee*: that is, I'le be with thee in all the ſharpeſt Afflictions thou meeteſt withal: They meet with many Afflictions, Sickneſs, Poverty, Reproach, Perſecution, and the like, but Chriſt is with them in all, and ſhews them his Love, and this ſweetens all to them The truth is, Chriſt is never more with his People, and he uſually never communicates more of his Love and Conſolations to them, than when in Affliction: Then uſually 'tis, that they have the ſweeteſt embraces of his Boſom, then they have the cleareſt ſights, the fulleſt taſts, the choiceſt and moſt eminent ſealings of his Love to them: *Then he leads them into his Banqueting-houſe, and diſplays the Banner of his Love over them: He ſtays them with Flaggons, and comforts them with Apples: His left hand is under their Head, and*

and his right hand doth embrace them, Cant. 2. 4,5,6. Then he miniſters his ſtrongeſt Conſolations to them, *comforting them in all their Tribulations*, 2 Cor. 1 4,5, The truth is, their ſharpeſt Afflictions are but to prepare them for his ſweeteſt Conſolations; and indeed he therefore oftentimes afflicts them, that he may manifeſt his Love, and miniſter Conſolations to them; according to that of *Hoſea* 2. 14. *I will allure her into the Wilderneſs, and there will I ſpeak comfortably to her*: and indeed, as ſtrong Conſolations oftentimes prepare for great Afflictions; ſo great Afflictions uſually make way for ſtrong Conſolations. 'Afflictions (*ſays a worthy Divine*) is the Air, in 'which Chriſt's Love eſpecially breaths; and Chriſt 'and the Croſs are ſweet Company. This, *viz.* Chriſt's Love and Preſence with his People in their Afflictions, is what turns their Night into Day, their Darkneſs into Light, their Pains into Eaſe, their Sorrows into Joy, their Loſſes into Gain; yea, and Death it ſelf into Life. *Tho I walk through the Valley of the ſhadow of Death, yet will I fear no evil, becauſe thou art with me*, Pſal. 23. 4. It turns a Priſon into a pleaſant Palace; yea, it turns a fiery Furnace into a delightful Walk; as in the caſe of the three Children, and this experienced Souls find: O how ſweet are Afflictions when Chriſt and his Love come with them!

2. By ſanctifying their Afflictions to them, and working good to their Souls out of all. Sanctified Afflictions are ſweet Afflictions; they meet with Afflictions, but Chriſt gives them the ſweet Fruit, and a bleſſed iſſue of them; makes them all work together for good to them, according to that great Oracle, *Rom.* 8. 23. *All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God.* By theſe he proves their Graces, and improves their Experiences; he

makes

makes them all to be, as the *Gibeonites* ſometimes were to the Congregation of God, as ſo many Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water to their Faith, to their Comforts, to their Holineſs on Earth, and Happineſs in Heaven. The Faith of this ſweetned all *Job*'s great and heavy Afflictions to him: *When I am tried* (ſays he) *I ſhall come forth as Gold*, Job 23. 10. Hereby he *tries their Faith, which is better than Gold*, 1 Pet. 1.7. Hereby he refines them, and purges away their Droſs from them; *Behold, I have refined thee, but not with Silver: I have choſen thee in the Furnace of Affliction*: or, as you may read it, I have made a choice one of thee in the Furnace of Affliction, *Iſa.* 48.10. Hereby *he makes them partakers of his Holineſs*, Heb. 12.10. *By this he purgeth away their Iniquity, and taketh away their Sin*, Iſa. 27. 9. In ſhort, hereby he humbles them, and ſeals inſtruction to them: hereby he weans them from the World, draws them nearer to himſelf, quickens their hearts in his good ways, and raiſes them up to higher ſtrains of Grace, and pitches in Holineſs, than they were got up to before: Yea, hereby he encreaſes their Revenue of Glory, and adds to their Crown in Eternity. *Our light Afflictions, which are but for a moment*, (ſays the Apoſtle) *work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. Thus he ſanctifies all; and O how doth this ſweeten all! Here is a Croſs, 'tis true, may the Soul ſay, but by this Croſs does Chriſt crucify me to Sin and the World, he weans me from the Creature, ſets me a longing after Heaven; and ſo long, welcom Croſs, how heavy ſoever. Here's an Affliction, 'tis true, and 'tis an heavy one; but by it Chriſt proves and brightens my Graces, and that ſweetens all. 'O 'what owe I (ſays *Rutherford*) to the File and Ham-'mer of my ſweet Lord Jeſus? He hath taught me

more

'more (*ſays he*) by my ſixth months Impriſonment, 'than ever I learnt in my nine Years paſt Miniſtry. '*Luther* was wont to ſay, Three things made a good 'Miniſter; Temptation, Affliction, Supplication. The ſame alſo conduce much to the making of a good Chriſtian: And indeed, 'tis ſeldom that ever a Soul comes to any eminency in Grace, until he has been exercis'd with ſanctified Afflictions and Temptations. And doubtleſs there is many a Soul who may and muſt ſay, That next to Chriſt, his Afflictions have, through his Grace and Bleſſing, been his beſt Mercies. O how ſhould this draw Souls to Chriſt, and allure them into a Marriage-Covenant with him! Poor Soul, it may be that which keeps thee from Chriſt, is the fear of what Afflictions thou mayeſt meet with in his ways. But know (1.) Thou mayeſt meet with Affliction, firſt or laſt, tho thou never cloſeſt with Chriſt; for wicked Men, and Unbelievers, meet with troubles and afflictions, and that even in this World oft-times: However, to be ſure at laſt, they will have a full Cup, yea, the very Dregs of Gods Wrath poured out unto them: They will meet with, and fall under ſorer and more dreadful Afflictions, than any thou canſt meet withal in the way, and for the ſake of Chriſt: for pray conſider, is there any trouble, any affliction thou canſt meet withal for Chriſt, like to this, for a Man to die in his Sins, to be ſeparated from God for ever, to have Infiniteneſs and Eternity combined againſt thee? Is there any trouble or afflictions like to the Torments of the Infernal Pit, and being the Object of infinite Wrath for ever? And yet this will be the lot at laſt of all that cloſe not with Chriſt in Marriage-relation. (2.) Whatever Afflictions thou mayeſt meet withal in the way of Chriſt, cloſing with him, he ſweetens all for thee; and that ſo as that thou

wouldeſt

wouldest not have been without them for a World; O scare not at the Cross, but close in with Christ.

VI. He subdues all their Enemies for them: True, the poor Saints and Spouses of Christ are beset with Enemies on all hands; they have many Enemies, and mighty Enemies; Enemies within, and Enemies without, and all in confederacy against them to destroy them, to destroy their Lives, to destroy their Graces, to destroy their Peace and Comforts, to destroy their Souls and Happiness for ever; all like so many roaring Lions seeking to devour them: Well, but Christ, who is their Captain as well as their Husband, subdues and conquers all for them; and, first or last, makes them to set their feet upon their necks, and triumph over them: He makes them *Conquerors, yea, more than Conquerors* over all, *Rom.*8.37. He makes them so to conquer them, as sooner or later to gain by all their Conflicts and Oppositions: Indeed, Christ has already conquered all his Peoples Enemies for them. The Saints have five great Enemies, *Sin*, *Self*, the *World*, the *Devil*, and *Death*: and Christ has long since conquered them all for them, and by degrees brings them into the joyful triumph of that Conquest.

1. He has conquered Sin for them: He by being made sin, hath obtained an eternal Victory over Sin for all his People: Sin is the Saints great Enemy; 'tis that which *wars against their Souls*, Rom. 7. 23. 1 Pet. 2. 11. And indeed this is that which gives all the rest an advantage against them; but even this greatest Enemy Christ has conquered for them: Hence he is said *to have condemned sin in the flesh*; *He for sin condemned sin in the flesh*, Rom. 8. 3. *i. e.* He by being made a Sacrifice for sin, hath killed and subdued sin, past a Sentence of Death and Condemnation upon sin for ever: hence also *our Old Man*

is

is ſaid to be *crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed*, Rom. 6. 6. Hence alſo he is ſaid *to deſtroy ſin, to take away ſin*, and the like: And how? Why as to the Reign and Power, as well as the Guilt and Curſe of it: And this *Paul*, acted by the Spirit of Faith, could triumph in, even whilſt he was in the ſharpeſt conflicts with ſin, *Rom.* 7. 23, 24, 25. *I thank God through Chriſt*, (ſays he) For what? Why, for victory over, and deliverance from the Law of Sin he was now conflicting with.

2. He has conquered Self for them: Self as well as Sin, is our deadly Enemy: This indeed is a near cloſe Enemy, and moſt difficult to be ſlain: This is an Enemy that we are too too loth many times to have deſtroyed, and yet an Enemy which makes woful ſpoil upon us and our happineſs. I often think of the Speech of a Holy and Learned Divine; *O*, ſays he, *if I could be Maſter of that Houſe-Idol my Self, my own, my own will, wit, credit, and eaſe, how bleſſed were I! O but we have need*, ſays he, *to be redeemed from our ſelves, rather than from the Devil and the World!* And preſently again he cries out, *O wretched Idol my ſelf! When ſhall I ſee thee wholly decourted, and Chriſt wholly put in thy Room!* And who that have any acquaintance with themſelves, do not find cauſe to cry out in like manner? O this Self, this wretched Self, how great an Enemy is it! Well, but this Chriſt hath conquered: and cloſing with him, thou ſhalt by degrees find it to die and fall under thee. *Paul* did ſo, *I am crucified with Chriſt*, ſays he, *nevertheleſs I live; yet not I*, Gal. 2. 20. He had an I, a Self which ruled in him; but by Chriſt 'twas crucified and ſlain for him, and he was a Conqueror over it.

3. He has conquered the World for them: take the World in what notion you will, and 'tis in

in one respect or other an Enemy to the Saints; the Men of the World, the Things of the World, the Frowns of the World, the Flatteries of the World, they all, one way or other, fight against them, and are Enemies to them. The World, as well as Sin and Self, is a mortal Enemy to them: But this Enemy also Christ has subdued and conquered for them; he has told them so much for their comfort, under the oppositions they meet with from it, *Joh.* 16. 23. *Be of good chear, I have overcome the World*, (says he) *q. d.* the World is your Enemy, but 'tis a conquer'd Enemy; 'twill molest and oppose you, but it shall not be able to hurt you, for I have conquered it for you. And as he has conquered it for us, so he will enable us, closing with him by Faith, to conquer it: so 1 Joh. 5. 4. *This is the Victory which overcometh the World, even our Faith:* The World shall not always annoy and infest the Saints.

4. He has conquered the Devil, yea all the Devils in Hell for them: The Devil is the Enemy of the Saints, and indeed he is a formidable one; an Adversary that *goes about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. He is a subtil, a potent, a malicious, a cruel, and an indefatigable Enemy: But so formidable an Enemy as he is, Christ hath conquered him for them; hence he is said *to have destroyed the Devil; he partook of flesh and blood, that through Death he might destroy him that had the power of Death, that is, the Devil*, Heb. 2. 14. *and to have spoiled Principalities and Powers, and to have made a shew of them openly on his Cross, triumphing over them*, Col. 2. 15. dragging them at his Chariot Wheels; as was the manner sometimes for Conquerors to deal by their vanquish'd Enemies: The Sum is, that he hath made a compleat and glorious conquest over all the Devils in Hell for Believers: he has conquered

quered them even to triumph: Chriſt has conquered the Devil for his Spouſes, as to his ruling, reigning, and commanding power; and he will, and does conquer him at laſt, yea ſpeedily, as to his tempting, vexing, and ſeducing power; *The God of Peace ſhall tread Satan under your feet ſhortly*, Rom. 16. 20. Shortly, Soul, the Devil ſhall vex thee no more, moleſt thee no more, infeſt and annoy thee by his temptations no more.

5. He has conquered Death for them: Death is an Enemy, and 'tis the *laſt Enemy that is to be deſtroyed*; ſo the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 26. and in it ſelf conſidered, a terrible Enemy, it is *the King of Terrors*, Job 18. 14. But this Enemy hath Chriſt conquered for all his; he has taken away all its killing Power, its Sting and Curſe, in ſo much that they may holily triumph over it, and rejoyce in its approach. The Apoſtle did ſo, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. *Death* (ſays he) *is ſwallowed up in Victory; O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The ſting of Death is Sin, the ſtrength of Sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* O what a Triumph does he here act over Death through the conqueſt Chriſt has gotten over it for him? Truly, this Enemy is ſo far conquered by him for them, that 'tis become indeed a friend to them; and they can, when in a right ſpirit, embrace it as ſuch, and long for it as ſuch. Chriſt by Death has unſtung Death, and in a ſort undeatht it: Thus Chriſt has conqueed all his Peoples Enemies, and they being made one with him in a Marriage-Covenant, all his Victories are theirs, and his Conqueſt theirs, and they are Conquerors over all in him; and O how ſweet how encouraging is this! and how ſhould it win Souls to cloſe with him! Poor Soul, thou ſeeſt thy ſelf environed

environed with Enemies, thou art hard beſet on all hands; Legions of Luſts and Devils attend with Self, Death, and the World, oppoſe themſelves againſt thee; and thou art often crying out, as *David* in another caſe, 2 *Sam.* 3. 19. *I am weak, and theſe Men, the Sons of* Zerviah, *are too ſtrong for me:* yea, thou art ready to ſay of them, as he ſometimes in his unbelief did of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. *I ſhall one day periſh by the hand of* Saul: Alaſs, I am a weak nothing-creature, and am unable to grapple with the leaſt of all mine Enemies; and how then ſhall I ſtand up againſt them all? ſurely I ſhall periſh by them at laſt. Well, Soul, but know for thy encouragement, that all thine Enemies are conquer'd by Chriſt, and though they are too ſtrong for thee, yet they are not too ſtrong for Chriſt to grapple with, and make thee a Conqueror over. When the Prophets Servant ſaw what a great and formidable *Hoſt compaſſed the City*, he cried out, *Alas, Maſter, what ſhall we do?* And what did his Maſter anſwer him? *Fear not* (ſaid he) *for they that be with us, be more than they that be with them*, 2 King. 6. 15, 16. So, poor Soul, when thou conſidereſt what great and formidable Enemies do compaſs thee about, thou crieſt out to one and another; Alas, Sir, what ſhall I do? But I would ſay to thee as the Prophet to his Servant; Fear not, there is more with thee than with them; thou haſt Chriſt with thee, to fight and overcome all for thee; therefore chear up, give up thy ſelf unto him; and the victory over *Sin*, *Self*, *World*, *Death*, *Devil*, and all is thine for ever. O, who would not have ſuch an Husband?

VII. He minds and manages all their Concerns for them. 'Tis the part of an Husband to mind and manage the concerns of his Wife, and to have a natural care both of her and them: And thus 'tis with

with Chriſt. He manages all his Peoples concerns, and that in Heaven, on Earth, and in our own Souls.

1. He minds and manages all their Concerns in Heaven for them: Their Affairs lie much in Heaven, their Buſineſs there is great; and Chriſt their Husband minds all, and tranſacts all for them, and that faithfully: Indeed he went thither on purpoſe to tranſact their Affair for them: Hence he is ſaid *to have entred not into the holy Place made with hands, but into Heaven it ſelf, there to appear in the Preſence of God for them*, Heb 9. 24. Hence alſo he is ſaid *to be an Advocate with the Father for them*, 1 Joh. 2.1. He pleads with the Father for them: Have they a Petition to preſent to the Father for this or the other Mercy? He preſents and prefers it for them: He takes all their Prayers, and ſprinkles them with his own Blood, perfumes them with the odours of his own Incenſe, and then tenders them to the Father with his own hand, *Rev.* 8. *beg.* We pray very brokenly, but he mends our Prayers, yea, oftentimes when we can't pray, when we can't ſpeak for our ſelves, he ſpeaks for us, and prefers our Petitions for us: Are their Charges and Accuſations brought in againſt them, either by Satan the Accuſer of the Brethren on the one hand, or by the Law and Juſtice of God, which are daily wrong'd & violated on the other hand? why Chriſt interpoſes for them, he anſwers all, and invalidates all, *he rebukes Satan*, Zech. 3. 2. In the firſt place we find *Joſhuah ſtanding before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan ſtanding at his right hand to reſiſt* (or accuſe) *him*; and *verſ.* 2. we have Chriſt ſharply rebuking Satan for his Accuſation: *The Lord ſaid unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath choſen Jeruſalem, rebuke thee:* And as he rebukes Satan, ſo he ſatisfies the Law and Juſtice of his Father: Hence he is ſaid *to make inter-*

intercession for them, and that to the overthrowing of all those Counter-pleas which Law or Justice can put in against them, *Rom.*8. 33. 34. Have they sinned, and do they need a new Pardon, need to have things set right and even between God and them afresh? This also Christ does for them; *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Christ Jesus the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 Joh. 2. 1, 2. While they through weakness and temptation are sinning on Earth, he out of his Grace and Love is pleading with the Father for them in Heaven: Thus he minds all their concerns in Heaven for them.

2. He minds and manages all their Concerns on Earth for them: The Saints have their Affairs and Concerns on Earth among Men, as well as in Heaven with the Father; and Christ their Husband minds and transacts all these likewise for them. Indeed he is ever mindful of them, and at work for them, *viz.* to do them good, and to promote their Interest: Hence, says he, *the Father worketh hitherto, and I work*, John 5. 17, I am always at work for your good. Are they wronged and oppressed by Enemies? he avenges all their wrongs: Hence he is said *to reprove Kings for their sakes*, Psal. 105. 14. and elsewhere, to plead their Cause against their Enemies, and the like. Do they need Deliverance and Salvation out of Troubles and Distresses? *He brings Salvation to them*, Isa. 63. 9. Do they need conduct and guidance through their Difficulties and Temptations in the Wilderness of the World? He leads and guides them; *He leads* Joseph *like a flock*, Psal. 80. 1. And elsewhere, *I will guide thee with mine Eye*: He carries them through all their Straits, and all their Difficulties; and even when he seems most to forget them, even then he is ever mindful of them,

them, and of their concerns: *For he hath graven them upon the palms of his hands, and their Walls are continually before him*; and tho they often ſay, *The Lord hath forſaken me, and my God hath forgotten me*; yet he never forſakes or forgets them, nor can he; *No, a Woman may ſooner forget her ſucking Child, and not have compaſſion upon the Son of her Womb, than he can forget his People*, Iſa. 49. 14, 15, 16.

3. He minds and manages all their Concerns for them in their own Souls: The Saints have many and great concerns to be minded within them, Concerns of great moment and importance; and, were they to be minded and managed only by themſelves, they would make but poor work: O! but Chriſt their Husband minds and manages all theſe likewiſe for them; and to be ſure they can't miſcarry in his Hand: He gives them his Spirit to work all their Works ~~in them, and~~ for them: He obſerves what Grace, what Strength, what Counſel, what Comfort they ſtand in need of, and by his Spirit miniſters all to them: Hence he is ſaid *to give them Grace and Mercy to help in a time of need*, ſeaſonable ſupplies, *Heb.* 4. 16. and to be both *the Author and Finiſher of their Faith*, Heb. 12. 2. He minds and obſerves how the great work goes on in their Souls, and he takes care for the proſpering and perfecting of it: O how ſhould this draw us to Chriſt, and encourage us to accept of the Offers of his Love? Is. 62. 12.

VIII. He injointers them in eternal Life and Glory. Husbands uſe to make Jointers to their Wives; they entitle them to ſuch or ſuch Lands and Inheritances: So Chriſt injointers all his Spouſes, in no leſs than eternal Life and Bleſſedneſs: He makes over a great Jointer to them; Glory, a weight of Glory, *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. *An Inheritance in light*, Col. 1. 12. *An Inheritance incorruptible*,

ruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. 1. 4. A Kingdom, an everlaſting Kingdom; *an everlaſting Kingdom prepared for them before the Foundation of the World*, Mat. 25. 34. *A Crown of Life*, Rev. 2. 10. *A Crown of Righteouſneſs*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. *A Crown of Glory, which never fades*, never withers, 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. The truth is, he endows them with all his Riches, Treaſures, Dignities, with all the Privileges of his Houſe, with all the Purchaſe of his Blood, with all the Bleſſings of his Love, with all the Treaſures of Heaven, with all the Glories of Eternity: Look, whatever is in the Promiſe, whatever is in the Covenant, whatever is in the glorious Counſel of Election: Look, whatever the Preſence of God, the Face of God, the Boſom of God can afford: Look, whatever the Heart of God could give, the Wiſdom of God contrive, the power of God produce, or the Blood of God purchaſe, that, all that does Chriſt enjointer his People in. O, Sirs, how ſhould this draw and allure us to Chriſt! Is Heaven and eternal Life worth nothing? Are all the Glories of Eternity of no value? O, who are you, that Chriſt ſhould be willing to inſtate you into all this? In your ſelves you are lying in the Lap and Boſom of Hell, Heirs of Wrath and Condemnation, in danger every moment of ſinking into the Infernal Pit: But lo! Chriſt comes and makes love to you; and if you will accept of him, he will entitle you unto Life and Bleſſedneſs, to ſuch things *as Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive of*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. Take him therefore, I beſeech you, into your moſt intimate embraces. Thus you ſee, in part, what great thing Chriſt does for his Spouſes: Now, will you accept of him, or will you not? May I not ſay to you, as *Saul* ſometimes did to his Servants? *Hear now, will the Son of* Jeſſe *give to every one of you Fields*,

Fields, and Vineyards, and make you Captains of Thouſands? 1 Sam. 22. 7. So, will *Sin*, or the *World*, or the *Law*, to which you are naturally wedded, do ſuch great things for you as Chriſt will? Will theſe pay your Debts for you, ſupply your wants for you, heal your Wounds for you, and the like? Will theſe ſecure your eternal Intereſt for you, and make you happy in the other World, as Chriſt would? Alas! they can do none of all this: O cloſe, cloſe therefore with Chriſt who can and will do all.

CHAP. IX.

Which opens a little the Heart of Chriſt, and ſhews how much he is ſet upon an Eſpouſal with Sinners.

SUrely Chriſt is the beſt Husband; and none can do ſuch great things as he for his Spouſes, which renders an Eſpouſal to him very deſirable: But will he take ſuch as we are into ſo near a Relation with him? Has he any Mind, any Heart to the Buſineſs? Any Mind, any Heart; His Heart is ſet upon nothing more, than an Eſpouſal with Sinners coming to him, and his Soul longs after them: Never did the more paſſionate Lover more long for an Eſpouſal between him and his Beloved, than Chriſt does for an Eſpouſal between himſelf and Sinners: And becauſe Love is the Loadſtone of Love, and the moſt powerful Attractive in order to the more effectual drawing and alluring your Souls to Chriſt, I ſhall a little, in a few particulars, open my ſweet Lords Heart to you in this Buſineſs: And O that the Reports of his Love to you, and his willingneſs to

eſpouſe you to himſelf, might draw your Hearts out a little in love to him, and work you into a willingneſs to be eſpouſed.

1. Such is the Heart of Chriſt, and ſo ſet upon an eſpouſal with Sinners, that he willingly became incarnate, bled, and died in order hereunto: and O, how ſhould this draw us to him? Should you ſee a man do ſome great Act of ſelf-denial and abaſement and withal freely venture his life in order to his obtaining ſuch or ſuch a one to his Wife, you would eaſily conclude, that his heart was much ſet upon an eſpouſal with her: Lo then! Chriſt has greatly denied and abaſed himſelf, he became incarnate, and not only freely ventured, but laid down his Life in order to an eſpouſal between himſelf and Sinners; and how much then muſt his Heart be in the Buſineſs?

(1.) He became incarnate in order hereunto. Had not Chriſt been incarnate, we could never poſſibly have been eſpouſed unto him, nor have enjoyed conjugal communion with him: but that we might be capable of, and arrive unto ſuch an happineſs, he who in himſelf was the eternal Son, freely became Incarnate, aſſumed humane Nature into union with his Divine Perſon: hence 'tis ſaid, *the word was made fleſh*, Joh. 1. 14. not that there was a tranſmutation of God into fleſh; but the Word of God, that is, God the Son, the Second Perſon in Trinity, aſſum'd Fleſh, humane Nature into union with himſelf; and ſo near is that Union into which the humane Nature is aſſumed with the Perſon of the Son of God, as that that nature hath no ſubſiſtence but what it has in his Divine Perſon: and for that ene, among others (as a learned Divine hath obſerved) 'tis ſo expreſt; *the word was made fleſh; namely, to note the infinite nearneſs of that union which our nature is taken into with the*

Divine

Divine Perſon; it being ſo near, as that it hath no ſubſiſtence of its own, but is, as it were, wholly melted into the Perſonality of the Son of God. Hence alſo he is ſaid *to partake of Fleſh and Blood, to be manifeſted in the Fleſh*, and the like: And O, what an Act of Self-denial and Abaſement was this! and how great was Chriſts condeſcenſion herein! In *Phil.* 2. 6, 7. the Apoſtle ſpeaks of it as the greateſt abaſement he could ſtoop unto: *Who*, (ſays he, ſpeaking of Chriſt) *being in the Form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himſelf of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Men.* Pray mark, he was in the Form of God; that is, he was truly and really God, as the Father was; and he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, *i. e.* he had all thoſe Divine Excellencies and Perfections in him, which the Father had in him: and yet (ſays he) he took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Men; that is, he became incarnate, he became Man. Well, and what does this argue? Even infinite condeſcenſion; therefore he tells us, that herein he became of no Reputation; or, as the Greek is, he emptied himſelf, to wit, of his Glory; his Glory was veiled and clouded hereby; the Glory of his Godhead was eclipſed: 'tis true indeed, his Godhead was not hereby loſt, or laid aſide; no, he was as much and truly God after his Incarnation, as he was before. He did not ceaſe to be God, by becoming Man. But (as one of the Ancients expreſſes it) *he was made that which he was not, and yet remained that which he was.* He was made Man, yet ſo as that he ſtill remained to be God: but tho his Godhead was not loſt, or laid aſide hereby, yet hereby was the Glory of it veiled and loſt for a time, and he was content to have it ſo: O, how great a Condeſcenti-

on was this? O! for him that was God, God equal with the Father, to become Man, to cover himſelf with the courſe Veil of our Fleſh, and be content for ſo long a time to loſe the Glory of his Deity, which was infinitely dear to him; and all this to make way for an eſpouſal between himſelf and poor Sinners: What ſelf-abaſement was this? and how ſhould it encourage Souls to look after an eſpouſal to him!

(2.) He not only became incarnate, but alſo freely bled, and died, in order hereunto: Which is a further diſcovery of his Heart herein, *Being* (ſays the Apoſtle) *found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs*, i.e. to the moſt formidable Death, a Death of pain, a Death of ſhame, an accurſed Death, *Phil.* 2.8. Hence alſo 'tis ſaid, that *he gave himſelf an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for us*, Epheſ. 5.2. Yea, not only did he bleed, and ſuffer, and die, but he did all freely, and with much readineſs and enlargedneſs of Soul; hence he is ſaid to have *poured out his Soul unto Death*, Iſa. 53.12. He ſeemed in an holy manner prodigal of his Life in the caſe; he thought neither Blood, nor Life, nor any thing too much for them. O, how much does this argue his Heart to be upon the Buſineſs? It ſpake *Jacob*'s Heart to be much ſet upon *Rachel* to have her to Wife, that he could be content to undergo ſo much hard Service for her as he did, even ſeven years Service. *Jacob* ('tis ſaid) *ſerved ſeven Years for* Rachel, *yea, and they ſeemed to him but a few days, for the Love he had to her*, Gen. 29. 20. So ſure it argues Chriſts Heart to be much ſet upon an eſpouſal with Sinners, that he was content not only to ſerve, but even bleed, and die for them, in order hereunto. O Sirs, behold, and wonder, Chriſt comes from Heaven, quits his Throne, leaves the

the Boſom of his Father, in which he had, with infinite delight, lain from Eternity! Behold and wonder, the Lord of Life dies, the God of Bleſſing was made a Curſe. The infinitely beloved Son treads the Wine-preſs of the Father's Wrath, Heaven deſcends into Hell, Glory veils and eclipſes it ſelf under ſhame and ignominy, the infinitely Holy One is made Sin; and all this to redeem, and redeeming eſpouſe poor Sinners to himſelf! And is not his Heart upon the Buſineſs, think you? And has he not love for them? O, be not faithleſs, but believe.

3. Such is the Heart of Chriſt, and ſo ſet upon an Eſpouſal with Sinners, that he condeſcends ſweetly to woo for them, and ſollicits them for their love and acceptance of him. Should you ſee a Man with all earneſtneſs and importunity wooing a Virgin and making Love to her, following her from day to day with renewed Offers and Sollicitations, you would conclude his Heart was much ſet upon an eſpouſal with her. And is it not thus with the Lord Jeſus toward poor Sinners? Does he not woo them, and make love to them, and that with all earneſtneſs and preſſing importunity, following them with renewed Offers and Sollicitations from day to day? Now he meets them in his Ordinance, and there he wooes them, and makes love to them; anon he meets them in that Ordinance, and there wooes them, and makes love to them: Now he ſends his Miniſters, and by them wooes them, and makes love to them; anon he ſends his Spirit, and by him woes them, and makes love to them: thus he is every way, and upon all occaſions, wooing them. And in his wooing of them,

How earneſtly does he call, and invite them to himſelf? 'tis not a cold offer, or a ſlight motion only that he makes to them, but he moves, and offers,

calls, and invites with all earneſtneſs and importunity: *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters, come ye, yea, come*, Iſa. 55. 1. And again, *The Spirit and the Bride ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, Come*, Rev. 22. 17.

How vigorouſly does he plead and expoſtulate the Buſineſs with them? Chriſt does not only call, and invite, but he alſo pleads, and expoſtulates with Sinners in the caſe; and that in the moſt winning way, and with the moſt weighty Arguments that poſſibly may be; *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come unto the Waters. Wherefore do you ſpend your Mony for that which is not Bread? and your Labour for that which ſatisfieth not? Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear and your Souls ſhall live, and I will make with you an, everlaſting Covenant, even the ſure Mercies of* David, Iſa 55. 2. 3. And again, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die, O Houſe of* Iſrael? Ezek. 33. 11. I have no pleaſure in your damnation, but had rather that you would come unto me, and live. Why will you die? Is not Life better than Death? Is not Heaven better than Hell? Is not my Love better than Luſt? Are not the *Pleaſures of my Preſence, and at my right Hand, which are for evermore, better than the pleaſures of Sin, which are but for a Seaſon*, a ſhort ſeaſon? *Why will you die? Is there no Balm in Gilead? is there no Phyſician there?* Am not I able to ſave you to the uttermoſt? and are not my Arms wide open to receive you? Have not I died for that very end, that you might live? Look, here's my Blood, here are my Wounds; behold me in the Garden, and ſee me bleeding there for you: Behold me upon the Croſs, and ſee me bleeding, yea, bleeding to Death there for you; and then ſee if you can find in your heart to refuſe me any longer? In ſhort, would you not loſe all your coſt and all your labour? Would you

enjoy

enjoy Good, the beſt Good, the moſt ſatisfying Good? Have you any mind to Life, and would you have your Souls live for ever? Have you any mind to my Covenant, and all the Riches and Treaſures of that? then accept of me and my Love, in whom you ſhall have all.

How ſweetly doth he melt, and how tenderly do his Bowels yearn towards them, and over them? He comes to them, not only with Invitations in his Lips, but alſo with Tears in his Eyes, and tender Compaſſion in his Heart, ſtrongly working towards them: Now he weeps, and then he groans; now he drops a ſigh, and then a tear; and all to melt their hard and unbelieving Hearts, to draw and allure them to himſelf. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem,* (ſays he) *how often would I have gathered thee?* Mat. 23. 37. *The Repetition of the Name, ſhews the depth of his Love and Commiſeration towards them.* And indeed, methinks I ſee how the tender Heart of my dear Lord melts, and even bleeds over this unbelieving City, and in them all unbelieving Sinners to whom he offers himſelf; he is melted into Tears towards them: So you have it, *Luk.* 19. 41, 42. in *Matthew* he groans only, but in *Luke* he both weeps and groans. Lo then! here is ſweet Jeſus weeping and groaning: Here's the Joy of the whole Earth weeping and groaning, and that over *Jeruſalem*, a bloody City, a City embroiled in the Blood of his Saints, and a City thirſty of his own Blood, a City full of Wickedneſs, full of the contempt of his Goſpel, his Grace, his Salvation.

How freely and openly does he reveal and offer himſelf them? The Offer Chriſt makes, is not a limited Offer, but general and extenſive to all; nor is it an offer made upon hard and ſevere terms, but upon terms of Grace and Love; *Look unto me, and be ſaved all ye ends of the Earth,* Iſa. 45. 22. *Ho, every one*

that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters; and he that hath no Mony, come ye buy, and eat; yea come, buy Wine and Milk without Mony, and without Price, Isa. 55. 1. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,* Mat. 11. 28 *Whoever is a thirst, let him come unto me, and drink,* John 7. 37. *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any Man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in,* Rev. 3 20. And again, *Whoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely,* Rev. 22. 17. Mark, all, every one, whoever will, tho never so vile and sinful, never so black and deformed, tho he has been never so desperate an Enemy to me and my Glory. Surely, were not his Heart much in the Business, he would not thus freely, and unlimitedly offer himself.

How affectionately does he beseech and intreat them? The tender trembling Child cannot more affectionately intreat and beseech his offended Father to spare him, and be reconciled unto him, than Christ does intreat and beseech offending Sinners to be espoused to him, and be made happy by him for ever: *Now then we are Embassadors for Christ,* (says the Apostle) *as tho God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,* 2 Cor. 5. 20. Pray mark, here is praying and beseeching the Lord of Glory, as it were, upon his knees to poor Sinners, begging them to accept of Him and his Love: *We Pray you in Christ's stead; h. e.* 'tis not we, but Christ by us, that prays and beseeches you: O, what condescension is this! Once more;

How sweetly does he draw and allure them? *Draw me* (says the Spouse) *and we will run after thee,* Cant. 1. 4. And indeed he does draw and allure Souls, and that with admirable sweetness; *I drew them with Cords of Love, with the Bands of a Man,* (says he) *Hos.* 11. 4. Now he sets his Beauty, Riches, and

Glory

Glory before them, thereby to draw and allure them; anon he drops a little Myrrh upon the handle of the Lock; he gives them ſome little taſte and feeling of his Grace and Love, thereby to draw and allure them: Now he ſweetly inſinuates his Love to them; he tells them, how much his Heart is upon them, what great things he has done and ſuffered for them; and how that he has no deſign upon them, but to make them happy for ever: Anon he lets them ſee how infinitely happy a Marriage-union and communion with him would make them; he lets in ſome ſmall glimpſes of Heaven and Glory upon them; he opens the Treaſures of his Covenant and Kingdom to them: Aud all this to draw and allure them to himſelf. And over and above all this, he ever and anon comes, and as it were, takes the Soul aſide, and by the ſtill voice of his Spirit, makes love to him: Come, poor Soul, ſays he, look upon thy bleeding, dying Saviour; come, ſee what I have done, and ſee what I have prepared for thee; ſee what treaſures of Life and Love, of Grace and Glory there are in me: Look, here is my Love, taſte and ſee if it be not *better than Wine*; here is my Boſom, make thy Bed in it, and ſee if it be not a warm Boſom. Come, Soul, tho thou haſt no love for me, yet I have love for thee, and would fain have thee happy for ever. Why therefore ſhouldſt thou ſtand at ſuch a diſtance from me? Thus he ſweetly wooes and ſollicites them for their Love and Acceptance of him. Now, Soul, does he thus woo thee, and wilt thou refuſe him? If ſo, know, that the time of Love will not always laſt: yea, and the time will come, when tho *thou calleſt, and crieſt, yet he will not hear:* Let me therefore ſay to thee, as *Paul* to his *Corinthians, Receive not the Grace of God in vain; for behold, now is the accepted time, now is the Day of Salvation.*

3. Such

3. Such is the Heart of Christ, and so set upon an Espousal with Sinners, that he not only thus wooes them, but also waits long upon them, often renews the offers of his Love to them, and puts up many horrid Affronts and Provocations at their hands, if at last he may prevail with them. Suppose a Man should not only make Love to a Person, but he should also wait long upon her in the tenders of his Love; and that tho he meet with many Affronts and Unkindnesses from her, this you would say, would argue his Heart to be much set upon her: And is it not thus with Christ towards poor Sinners? O how long does he wait upon them? how often does he renew the offers of his Love to them? And what affronts, Indignities, and Unkindnesses does he bear with at their hands? *Behold, I stand at the door and knock*, says he, *Rev.* 3. 10. Standing, is a waiting posture: Christ does not give a call or a knock at the Door of the Sinner's Heart, and away; no, he stands knocking, he gives call after call, and knock after knock, being ever ready to enter, if the Soul will at all open to him. So again, *All the day long have I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gain-saying People; a People that provoketh me to anger continually to my face*, Isa. 65. 2. 3. Rom. 10 21. *All the day long.* Christ waits day after day, and week after week, and month after month, and year after year upon Sinners, yea, and many Affronts and Indignities does he put up, and pass by for them! *All the day long have I stretched forth my hands*, opened the Arms and Bosom of my Love, and that *to a gain-saying and rebellious People*, an Opposing, Refusing, Resisting People, a *People that provoked me to my Face continually* every day; a People that are daily loading me with their Sins and Provocations; a People that will not let me go one day without affronting

fronting me, and that to my Face; a People that are every day daring me to damn them: O what patience is this? So, *Mat.*23.37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldeſt not?* How often? not once, or twice, or ten times, but very often: it notes that he waited long upon them, and ſtrove long with them, and that after many and often repeated Affronts and Refuſals on their part, he ſtill tendred Himſelf and his Love to them: and thus he deals by Sinners ſtill, he tenders Himſelf and his Love to them, but they will have none of him: he renews his Offers, and they renew their Refuſals: they ſpurn at his Love, yet he makes Love ſtill; he tells them what great preparations he has made, and how all things are ready, and how welcome they ſhall be to the Marriage-Feaſt; but *they make light of all*, preferring a worldly Intereſt before him and it, *Matth.* 22. *beg.* Well, however he leaves them not, but ſends again, and calls again, notwithſtanding all. They do in effect tell him, they deſire neither him nor his Grace, that they had rather enjoy their Luſts, than his Love: they abuſe his Grace, they deſpiſe his Corrections, they ſlight his Calls, they reſiſt his Spirit: O what Affronts are theſe! And after all this, it may be, he renews his Suit, laying himſelf and his Love at their Feet, if yet he may win them to him. O how much muſt his Heart be upon an Eſpouſal with them! Soul let it melt thee into Love to him. O who would withſtand ſuch a Lord, ſuch a Lover! What? woo, and wait ſo long too, put up ſuch, and ſo many Affronts, and ſtill make Love? Was ever Love like this, and Patience like this?

4. Such is the Heart of Chriſt, and ſo ſet upon an Eſpouſal with Sinners; as that he has laid himſelf under Bonds to receive them, and accept of them in

in case they are willing to be espoused to him: and what greater discovery of his Heart than this? Should a young Man lay himself under Bonds to marry such or such a Woman, tho as yet she hated him, and were utterly averse from him; you would surely conclude that his Heart was much set upon a Match with her: and truly this is no more than Christ the Lord of Glory hath done: he is become bound to marry poor Sinners to himself, yea, tho at present they hate him, and are altogether averse from him; yet in case they shall at last be willing to close with him, he is become bound to receive them. He is become bound, both to the Father, and to them.

1. He is bound to the Father to receive Sinners, and espouse them to himself, in case they come to him: So much is held forth in *John* 6. 27. *Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endures unto everlasting Life, which the Son of Man shall* [mark] *give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed*: that is, God the Father hath ordained and appointed Christ; he has laid a Law upon him to give Eternal Life, and therefore himself to Sinners coming to him; and we may therefore rest assured that he will do it: yea, Christ looks upon himself as under a Law from the Father to do it, and therefore says, *Thy Law is within my Heart*, Psalm 40. 8. Thy Law: What Law? Why, the Law of his Mediatorship, which commands him, as to die for Sinners, so to accept of Sinners when they come unto him: and surely he that so freely fulfilled it in the one, will not be disobedient to it in the other. In a word, in that Covenant (by Divines called the Covenant of Redemption) which past between the Father and Jesus Christ from Eternity, concerning the Salvation of Sinners, Christ became bound to the

the Father to receive all that ſhould come to him, and he we will be faithful.

2. He is bound to Sinners themſelves in the caſe: He has indeed given them his Bond; he has given them his Promiſe, which is his Bond, and a ſtrong one too, an invincible Obligation, and the Soul may look on it as ſuch: but where is his Promiſe? truly the whole Goſpel is but as it were one general Promiſe made by him to this purpoſe: but take one for all the reſt, Joh. 6. 36. *All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*, i.e. I will moſt aſſuredly receive him, and beſtow my ſelf and eternal Life upon him. And how often has he renewed this Bond of his! yea, and that it might be Firm and Valid to our Faith, as well as in it ſelf, he hath hereunto added his Seal, and that ſuch a Seal as renders it altogether unqueſtionable; for 'tis the Seal of his own Blood: Hence the Goſpel is called *the New Teſtament in his Blood*, that is, ſeal'd and *ratified in his Blood*, Luke 2. 20. And his Blood is called *the Blood of the Covenant*; becauſe the Covenant and Promiſes thereof are ſealed with that Blood, *Heb.* 9. *latter end.* Yea, more yet; if his Promiſe and his Seal be not enough, they ſhall have more, for to both theſe he has added his Oath for their further ſecurity in the Caſe; *Verily, verily*, (ſays he) *he that believeth on me, hath everlaſting Life: and ſhall not come into condemnation*; and again, *Verily, verily, the hour cometh, and now is, when the Dead ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live*, Joh. 5. 24, 25. *As I live*, was the form of God's Oath in the Old Teſtament, and he there ſwears, *he hath no pleaſure in the death of ſinners, but had rather they would turn and live*, Ezek. 33. 11. and *Verily, verily*, is the form of *Chriſt's* Oath in the New Teſtament, and he there (you ſee) Swears that

Souls

Souls shall live coming to him. *O happy we* (as one of the Ancients cryes out) *for whose sakes God doth Swear; but O unbelieving we, if we do not believe him Swearing.* Thus Christ hath given us his Bond, his Promise, and that sealed with his Blood, and to all added his Oath for the further encouragement of our Faith; and what can we desire more? If you have a Man's Promise to you for the performance of this or that, you think you are well, you judging him to be both able and faithful; but if you have his Seal added to his Promise, then you look upon your selves secure of the Business indeed; but if to both these you have his Oath added, then you look on the Business past all doubt, and you dare not question it: why lo! *Christ* has given poor *Sinners* all this to assure them that he will embrace and accept them coming to him; and O how firm may their Faith stand upon all this? and what horrid wickedness must it be so much as once to question it? True, neither his Seal, nor his Oath, adds any thing to the truth and certainty of the Promise in it self; but to our sense and apprehension it does; and meerly out of indulgence to us and our weakness, is the one and the other added; so the Apostle tells us, Heb. 6. 17, 18. *God willing more abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of Promise the immutability of his Counsel, confirmed it by an Oath: that by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lye we might have strong Consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before us.* Mark, 'twas not to confirm, or add any thing to the truth and certainty of *God*'s Counsel or Covenat, that his Oath was added; but 'twas to confirm and encourage our Faith. Thus you see Christ is under Bonds to receive and accept of Sinners, if they come to him, and are willing of an Espousal with him: and how much does

does this argue his Heart to be in the Buſineſs? O let none ever ſay, will Chriſt accept and receive me coming to him? For indeed Bonds bind him ſo to do. The truth is, were he under no Bonds, we need not queſtion it; for his Bowels would conſtrain him; and had he no Bowels, we need not doubt it, for Bonds would bind him to it. Chriſt muſt deny his Word, Promiſe, Seal, Oath and all, if he refuſe any Soul that indeed comes to him, and deſires to cloſe in a Marriage-covenant with him: O what encouragement is this!

5. Such is the Heart of Chriſt, and ſo ſet upon an Eſpouſal with Sinners, as that he has given them a full and unqueſtionable aſſurance, that nothing (whatever) ſhall ſtand between him and them, nor prejudice their acceptance with him, in caſe they be willing to be eſpouſed unto him: Should a Man not only make love to a Perſon, wait long upon her in the tenders thereof, and the like, but alſo give a full aſſurance that nothing ſhall ſtand between him and her to hinder the Match, in caſe ſhe be willing to accept of him; this would argue his Heart to be much upon her indeed: Now, this alſo *Chriſt* hath done, he hath given Sinners a full and firm aſſurance that nothing ſhall prejudice their acceptance with him, nor hinder the Match between him and their Souls, in caſe they be willing to it: and is not his Heart then much upon the Buſineſs? This is no other than what he himſelf declares, *John* 6. 37. And certainly he doth not delude Souls with vain words; *Him that cometh unto me*, (ſays he) i. e. he that believeth on me, he that is willing to be mine, *him I will in no wiſe caſt out*: In no wiſe, or by no means, upon no accounts whatſoever: Nothing ſhall obſtruct his acceptance with me; but I will receive him with a Notwithſtanding, notwithſtanding all his vileneſs, all

all his unworthiness, all his unkindness, all his unsuitableness; notwithstanding all that either Men, or Devils, Law, or Conscience can charge upon him; yea, or that Unbelief it self can pretend or alledge; be it what it will, notwithstanding all, I'll receive him into the Bosom of my Love. *Christ*'s language to poor Sinners, in this promise of his, and many more of like import, is such as this: Come, poor Souls, be not afraid of me, whatever your condition be, and however things stand, and are stated with you, yet if you have a mind to me, and an Espousal with me, assure your selves that nothing shall obstruct your acceptance with me, nothing shall shut up my Bosom against you; but *I will betroth you to my self for ever.* O what encouragement is here? Come to Christ, and close with Christ in a Marriage-covenant; who would not do that, may some say? But alas, there are a thousand things that will hinder the Match, and stand between him and me, should I go to him. Poor Soul! this is apparenly the plea and language of Unbelief, and let it be silenced for ever, *Christ* having (as thou seest) fully assured us of the contrary. But besides, what is it that thou feareſt, (or that any Soul can fear) will stand between Christ and thee, to hinder an Espousal with Him? Bring forth thy strong Pleas, and see if they will bear any weight in the Sanctuary-ballance.

1. Is it outward Meanness and Baseness? possibly thou art low and mean and base in the World; thou art a poor forlorn despicable Creature; and this thou thinkest will stand between *Christ* and thee; surely (sayst thou) Christ will never take such a contemptible Worm as I am, into such a Relation with himself: But Sinner, this shall not hinder in the least, for Christ is no Respecter of Persons; *High and Low, Rich and Poor, Bond and Free, are all*

one

one in Chriſt, and to *Chriſt*, *Gal.* 3. 28. Yea, does not the World tell us, that *he chooſes the poor of this World, Heirs of the Kingdom, and rich in Faith*, James 2. 5. And again, ye ſee your calling, Brethren, (ſays the Apoſtle) *how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God chooſes fooliſh, and weak, and baſe ones*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26, 27, 28. As Greatneſs is no furtherance, ſo meanneſs and baſeneſs is no hindrance in this caſe. Men indeed mind Honour and Greatneſs, they will have ſuch as are ſuitable to themſelves: But 'tis otherwiſe with Chriſt: Poor Sinner, tho thou beeſt never ſo low, and mean, and baſe in the World: tho thou ſhouldſt be cloathed with Rags; yet if thou haſt a mind to Chriſt, he will accept thee, and marry thee to himſelf; yea, and thy Soul will be as dear to him, and as precious in his ſight, as the Soul of the greateſt Prince or Monarch in the World.

2. Is it inward Blackneſs and Deformity? Perhaps, Sinner, if thou art not outwardly Mean and Baſe, yet thou ſeeſt thy ſelf inwardly Black and Deformed; thou lieſt in thy Blood and Gore, wallowing in thy ſin and filth; neither is there any worth and beauty in thee, for which Chriſt ſhould deſire thee; and therefore, ſayeſt thou, ſurely Chriſt will have nothing to do with me, nor ſo much as caſt an eye or look of love upon me: But, Soul, this ſhall not ſtand between Chriſt and thee neither; but if thou haſt a mind to him, he will marry thee to himſelf notwithſtanding: For indeed Chriſt marries not any for their Beauty; but thoſe whom he marries, he marries to make them Beautiful: He marries them not for any worth of theirs; but to put a worth upon them, and indeed there are none that he eſpouſes to himſelf, but he finds them black and deformed,

deformed, in their Blood and Gore, as well as thee; and so they are, till he puts his Beauty upon them. How sweet is that word, *Ezek.* 16. 6, 7, 8. *When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood*, i. e. in thy sin and filth, *I said unto thee, Live*; *I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy Blood, Live*; *yea, when thou wast in thy Blood, Live.* Mark, three times he mentions it, *in thy Blood, in thy Blood, in thy Blood*, to note the depth of that defilement we are all under. Well, and what then? Will Christ have any thing to do with such? Yes, he makes love to them: *Behold, thy time was the time of Love*: he marries them to himself in an Everlasting Covenant, *I spread my Skirt over theee* (says he) *and covered thy nakedness*; *yea I swear unto thee, and entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine*: Yea, not only so, but he puts a Beauty; yea, his own Beauty and Comeliness upon them; *Thou art come to Excellent Ornaments, and art comely through my Comeliness which I have put upon thee*, as *Verse* 14. O Soul, be not discouraged, Christ will turn thy Blackness into Beauty, and not cast thee off because of it.

3. Is it the greatness and hainousness of thy Sin and Guilt? O my Sins, my Sins (says the poor Soul) they are exceeding many, and exceeding great; they are many and great in themselves, and they are cloathed with many and great aggravations. Few in the World ever sinned at that rate that I have done; therefore I fear that Christ wll never own me so, as to take me into such a Relation with himself: well, be it so; yet know, that this shall not stand between *Christ* and thee, if thou art willing to be espoused to him: He has promis'd to pardon great Sins, and to accept, notwithstanding great Sins, in case the Soul be but willing: *Come now* (says he) *and let us reason together*; *though your Sins are as Scarlet*,

Scarlet, they ſhall be white as Snow; though they are red like Crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool, Iſa. 1. 18. *Tho your Sins are as Scarlet, and as Crimſon*, i. e. Tho they are great, foul, enormous Sins; Sins of a hainous and crying Nature, and *cloathed* with the greateſt aggravations, yet they ſhall be *white as Snow and Wool*, i. e. They ſhall be fully done away and pardoned, ſo fully done away and pardoned, as if they had never been ſo. So again, *Iſa.* 43. 24, 25. *in the 24th ver.* He ſpeaks to ſome who had made him *to ſerve with their Sins, and wearied him with their Iniquities*: Theſe ſurely were great Sinners, and their Sins of a hainous crying Nature; and yet at the *25th ver.* what a full promiſe of pardon does he make to them? *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and will not remember thy Sins.* Poor Soul, what ſhall I ſay? haſt thou abundantly ſinned? Haſt thou multiplied Sins? He has promiſed *abundantly to pardon, and to multiply pardons*, Iſa. 55. 7. Art thou guilty of all manner of Sins? and to thy other Sins haſt thou added Blaſphemy? He has promiſed, *that all manner of Sin and Blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven, except that againſt the holy Ghoſt*, (which thy complaining of the greatneſs of thy Sins argues thou art not guilty of) *Mat.* 12. 31. O Soul, be not diſcouraged becauſe of the greatneſs of thy Sins: Chriſt marries Souls, not becauſe they are not Sinners, great Sinners, but he marries them to take away their ſins, and to diſcharge them from them for ever: And the greater thy Sins are, the greater will be the Glory of Chriſts Grace (which is what he aims at) in receiving of thee into ſo near and glorious a Relation with himſelf as this is: Beſides, what wilt thou do with thy great Sins, unleſs thou goeſt with them to Chriſt? Great

Sins

Sins argue a great need for Christ, and call for great hastning unto Christ.

4. Is it any former neglects or refusals of thine? Possibly not only are thy Sins many and great, but there is this added to all the rest, long and frequent Refusals of *Christ* and his Love: He has often called, but thou hast given him no answer; he has long wooed thee, but thou hast not complied with him: O the many sweet Calls, gracious Offers, loving Tenders, which he has made to thee, and thou hast despised! And this makes thee fear, that he will now have nothing to do with thee. And truly Soul, this is sad, very sad: hereby Christ has lost much Glory, which thou mightest have brought him; hereby thou hast lost much sweet Communion, which thou mightest have enjoyed; hereby Christs heart has been much grieved, which might have been prevented; and hereby the Work is made much more difficult than at first it was, thy Heart being grown more hard, and Corruptions more strong. Thus 'tis every way very sad, that thou hast thus neglected and refused Christ: but yet neither shall this stand between him and thee, in case thou art willing to be espoused to him: For this, see *Prov.* 1. 20, 21, 22, 23. *Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the Streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates, in the City she uttereth her words, saying: How long ye simple ones will you love simplicity, and the Scorners delight in their Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledg? Turn you at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* Pray observe, Christ hath offered himself, and his Love to them, but they had refused him and it; yea, they had refused long, and refused with much con-

contempt: *How long, ye ſimple ones, will you love ſimplicity?* &c. They ſcorn'd the Offers of Chriſt, and his Love; and yet here he renews thoſe Offers to them, wherein he tells them, that none of all their Refuſals ſhould prejudice their acceptance with him, in caſe they are willing to be his: *Turn ye at my Reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit*, &c. And Soul, do not the moſt refuſe long, and ſtand it out long againſt the Offers of Chriſt and his Grace, e're they cloſe with him, who yet are received and embraced by him? Be not therefore diſcouraged, poor Soul, becauſe of thy former neglects and refuſals of Chriſt, but throw thy ſelf into the Arms of his Love, which thou wilt certainly find wide open to receive and embrace thee.

5. Is it any revolting or backſliding of thine from him? Poſſibly thou haſt ſometimes been on the way towards Chriſt, thou haſt had ſome workings, ſome good Reſolutions and Affections within thee for him: Ay, and thou haſt made ſome profeſſion of him; thou haſt ſometimes been even upon the turning point, the point of cloſing with Chriſt; and the Match has bin near made up between him and thee: And yet after all this, thou haſt revolted and backſliden from him, *Playing the Harlot with many Lovers*, which makes thee fear that he will now reject thee, ſhouldeſt thou go to him. And the truth is, this alſo is very ſad; for hereby Chriſt has been eminently diſhonoured, and thy Soul has been eminently endangered: But yet be not diſcouraged, for this ſhall not ſtand between Chriſt and thee, if yet thou art but willing to be eſpouſed to him: Chriſt offers himſelf and his Grace to ſuch as theſe; he promiſes to heal Backſlidings; Jer. 3. 1. *Tho thou haſt played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return unto me, ſaith the Lord.* And v. 12. *Return thou back-ſliding Iſrael, and I will*

will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful. So *Hos.*2.19.*I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me.* Thee; Who? Why as a revolting and backsliding People as ever were in the World; so you will find in the beginning of the Chapter. There is hope then (you see) for Revelters and Backsliders; therefore be not discouraged, but go to him, and he will not cast thee out. Well, Soul, here's encouragement enough for thee, notwithstanding all thy Vileness, Sinfulness, and Unworthiness: And to add to thy encouragement yet, know, Christ has received multitudes that were every way as vile, sinful and unworthy as thou art. What dost thou think of *Manesseh*, who was a Sorcerer and an Idolater? What dost thou think of *Paul*, who was a Persecuter and a Blasphemer? What dost thou think of *Mary Magdalen*, who had seven Devils in her? What dost thou think of *Rahab*, who was an Harlot? What dost thou think of multitudes of those who crucified Christ, but afterwards believed? These were all great Sinners, and yet Christ received them into the Arms of his Love. What dost thou think of the black List and Catalogue of Sinners among the *Corinthians*, mentioned 1 *Cor.*6.9. & 10. who were *Drunkards, Thieves, Murderers, Adulterers, Idolaters, abusers of themselves with Mankind*, and the like? What dost thou think of them, *Titus* 3.3. who were *Foolish, Disobedient, living in Envy, hateful, and hating one another, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures?* Surely these are as vile, as sinful, as worthless as thou art, and had as much to stand between Christ and them; and yet they found Grace in Christs sight, upon their looking to him. Indeed there is never a Soul now in Heaven, but was by nature every way as vile, sinful, and unworthy of Christ, as thou: they lay under the same Pollu-

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tion, they wallow'd in the ſame Blood, they were filled with the ſame Spirit of oppoſition againſt God and his ways, that thou doſt and art; yea, and multitudes of them were as vile and ſinful by practice alſo, as thou; they acted out the Sin and Enmity of their Natures as highly againſt God and Chriſt, as thou haſt done; and yet theſe Chriſt received, elſe they had not been in Heaven. In a word, Heaven (as one obſerves) is an Houſe full of the Miracles of Chriſt's free Grace: There's Idolatrous *Manaſſeh* among the true Worſhipers of God: There's oppreſſing *Zacheus* among the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect: There's blaſphemous Paul among the Hoſt of Angels, lauding, praiſing, and ſinging *Halelujahs* to God and the Lamb: And there is *Mary Magdalen*, that had ſeven Devils, among the Saints of the moſt High, who are filled even to overflowing with the ſeven Spirits of God. O, who then would be diſcouraged? Yea, Soul, all thy vileneſs, ſinfulneſs, and unworthineſs does, but as it were, qualify thee for Chriſt and his free Grace. My ſinful Wants and Unworthineſs (ſays *Rutherford*) have qualified me for Chriſt and his Grace. Caſt thy ſelf therefore fully upon him notwithſtanding all, not doubting thine acceptance with him.

6. Such is the Heart of Chriſt, and ſo ſet upon Eſpouſal with Sinners, as that he delights and rejoices in nothing more hardly, than in the Nuptials between him and them: and O, how ſhould this draw and allure us to him! Should you ſee a young Man rejoicing in the ſenſe of an Eſpouſal between himſelf and ſuch, or ſuch an one whom he loved, you might well conclude, that his Heart was much upon her: And is it not thus here? Chriſt rejoices in the ſight and ſenſe of an Eſpouſal between Himſelf and Sinners; and how much does this argue

his Heart to be in the Business? This I will give you in three Propositions.

1. This is what he rejoiced and delighted himself in the thoughts of from all Eternity. Thus much he himself tells us, *Prov.*8. 30, 31. Then, namely, from everlasting, *was I by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoycing always before him: Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the Earth, and my delights were with the Sons of Men:* These are Christs words, and in them he tells you where he was, and what he had been doing from Eternity, he was with the Father, and rejoiced before him: But what did he rejoice in? Truly, next to the Father and himself, his rejoycing was in the habitable parts of the Earth, and his Delights were with the Sons of Men. He delighted himself in the thoughts of saving poor Sinners, and espousing them unto himself in order thereunto. O how much does this argue his Heart to be in the Business?

2. As he thus delighted and rejoiced in the thoughts of it before-hand; so when at any time a poor Soul is actually espoused to him, then he rejoices afresh, and is delighted afresh. Hence the day of Espousals is called *the day of the gladness of his Heart*, Cant.3.11. The day of Espousals between Christ and a poor Sinner, is a day of gladness and rejoicing to the Father, a day of gladness and rejoicing to the blessed Spirit, a day of gladness and rejoicing to the holy Angels, and Spirits of just Men made perfect; *For there is joy in Heaven*, at this, *Luke* 15. 7. But 'tis especially a day of gladness and rejoicing to Christ the Bridegroom. O to see poor Sinners come in and give up themselves to him in a Marriage-covenant; this is the joy, the feast, the satisfaction of his Soul: Hence 'tis said, *He shall see of the travel of his Soul, and be satisfied*, Isa. 53. 11.

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'Tis a great grief and trouble to Chriſt, that which wounds his very Soul, when having wooed poor Sinners, and time after time made love to them; they notwithſtanding are ſhie of him, and will not cloſe with him in a Marriage-covenant: Hence he complains as he does, *Joh* 5. 41. *You will not come to me that you might have Life.* And, *Mat.* 23.37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldſt not?* He ſpeaks complainingly, and as one grieved at heart at their neglects of him, yea, this was that which made him weep, as he did over *Jeruſalem*, *Luke* 19. 41, 42. Behold the Joy of the whole Earth weeping! And why? Becauſe of their refuſals of him and his Grace, and the woful deſtruction that for theſe refuſals were coming upon them. Indeed, this is what reflects great diſhonour upon his Name, pours great contempt upon his Grace, and is directly contrary to the whole Deſign of his Undertaking, as Mediator, and ſo cannot but be grievous to him: So on the contrary, when Souls come freely in, and give up themſelves in a Marriage-relation to him, this glads and rejoices his Heart: O how ſhould this draw Souls to him? Sinner, why may not this day be made the day of the gladneſs of Chriſt's Heart, by being a day of Eſpouſals between him and thee? He has ſeen many a day of grief of Heart, and trouble of Heart, becauſe of thy ſtanding out againſt him, and refuſing the Offers of his Love: O now let him ſee one day of joy of Heart, and gladneſs of Heart, by thy cloſing up with him in a Marriage-covenant.

3. As Chriſt delights and rejoyces when Souls are eſpouſed to him; ſo being eſpouſed to him, he delights and rejoyces in this Eſpouſal for ever: Men marry ſuch or ſuch, and they rejoice therein at preſent, but their Joy does not laſt. 'Tis otherwiſe

with Chriſt, he did rejoice in the thoughts of it from all Eternity; he does rejoice in the being and accompliſhment of it here in time, and he will rejoyce in the conſummation of it in Heaven for ever: The truth is, his Joy is not compleat, till the Marriage be compleat; nor will his Joy ever end, till that end, which will never be (as in its place may be ſhewn.) Thus you ſee a little what Chriſts Heart is, and how much ſet upon this Buſineſs, as well as what manner of Husband he is, and what great things he does for all his Spouſes. And now after all, what do you ſay? Art thou for Chriſt or no? Shall the Nuptial go on between him and your Souls, or ſhall it not? Soul, what anſwer muſt I give my Lord and Maſter that ſent me to thee? 'Tis but a little while, and he will call both thee and me to an Account concerning theſe things; and I muſt ſay, Lord, I woo'd that Soul for thee; I beſought him to be eſpouſed unto thee; and ſo far as I was able, I diſplayed thy Beauty, thy Riches, thy Glory before him: I opened thy Heart to him, ſhewed him thy Love, and thy willingneſs to be eſpouſed to him, hoping that the Cords of thy Love would draw him; and with my whole ſtrength entreated him to give up himſelf in a Marriage-covenant to thee. Well, and what was the iſſue? Lord, thou knoweſt. But, Soul, what Anſwer muſt I return? Muſt I be put to ſay, Lord, I labour in vain, and ſpent my ſtrength in vain, for he made light of all, and would have none, either of thee or thy Love? O put me not to make this diſmal Anſwer; rather let me have cauſe to ſay, *Behold, I and the Children which God hath given me:* Behold, this Soul, and that Soul, and many Souls were won over to thee. *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Which directs Souls, and ſhews them the way how to attain unto this ſweet and bleſſed Eſpouſal with Jeſus Chriſt.

AN Eſpouſal with Chriſt! what more ſweet? what more deſireable? And who that underſtands himſelf, would not cover it, before any thing this World affords? No Husband like Chriſt, and no happineſs like to an Eſpouſal to him. But the Queſtion is, how we may attain hereunto? Truly, Soul, the Work is great, and 'tis the Divine Spirit alone that does and can tie the Marriage-Knot between Chriſt and thee; but he works in this, as well as in other caſes, in and by the uſe of means; and there are ſeveral things highly incumbent upon thee, and which muſt be attended by thee, as ever thou wouldſt attain to an acquaintance with this bleſſed Eſpouſal.

1. Wouldſt thou be eſpouſed to Chriſt? Then labour to be deeply ſenſible of thy utter eſtrangement from him by Nature; as alſo of thy woful miſery by reaſon of that eſtrangement. A deep ſenſe of our eſtrangement from Chriſt, and of our miſery by reaſon of that eſtrangement, is one good ſtep towards a Conjugal union and Relation to him; and without the one, we are never like to attain unto the other. Labour therefore for this.

1. Labour to be deeply ſenſible of your eſtrangement from Chriſt by Nature. Naturally we are all ſtrangers to Chriſt, ſtrangers to all Conjugal-

Union and Communion with him. We know not what any ſuch thing means. As 'twas with the *Epheſians*, ſo 'tis with us all by Nature, they were, and we are *without Chriſt in the World*, Epheſ. 2. 12. And not only *without him*, *but* alſo *far from him*, as it follows *verſ.* 13. I may truly ſay to every Natural Man and Woman in this, as *Peter* did to *Simon* in another caſe, *Acts* 8. 21. *Thou haſt neither Part nor Lot in this matter:* Thou knoweſt not what Union and Communion with this ſweet Lord means: Yea, not only are we by Nature eſtranged from Chriſt; but moreover we are at enmity with him, and fill'd with hatred and oppoſition againſt him: We, as thoſe mentioned *Luke* 19. 14. *Do hate him, and would not have him to reign over us.* Naturally we are at enmity with Chriſt, and with every thing that is his, with his Perſon, with his Preſence, with his Spirit, with his Kingdom, with his Laws and Ordinances, with his Graces, with his Righteouſneſs, and the like. His Perſon is too holy for us, his Preſence too pure, his Spirit too convincing, his Kingdom too Spiritual, his Laws and Ordinances too ſtrict, his Graces too bright, his Righteouſneſs too oppoſite to *Self*; and ſo we hate all, and are at enmity with all: yea, we are at enmity with the very way of Life and Salvation by him: *Touching the Goſpel, they are Enemies*, ſays the Apoſtle; which is ſpoken of the Jews, but true of all by Nature, *Rom.* 11. 28. We would live, but not by Chriſt; we would be ſaved, but not by Chriſt: Thus naturally we are all eſtranged from him; and thus high does our eſtrangement riſe, which we muſt be deeply ſenſible of, if ever we get Union and Communion in a conjugal way with him: Therefore work this a little upon your Thoughts, till you find your Heart begin to bleed and relent over it.

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2. Labour to be deeply ſenſible of your exceeding great miſery by reaſon of this eſtrangement. As we are all naturally without Chriſt, ſo our Miſery herein is exceeding great: So much the Apoſtle holds forth, in the place before quoted, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. Where he ſpeaks of our being *without Chriſt*, as our Miſery; yea, as the Spring and Foundation of all our Miſery, and therefore that is firſt mentioned: The *Epheſians* were, and we are (as he there tells us) *without the Covenant, without Hope, and without God in the World*; Miſery enough for any Soul to lie under; and the Inlet and Foundation of all is, their and our being *without Chriſt*. As to have Chriſt (ſays a learned interpreter upon this place) is the Foundation of all good: So, to be without Chriſt, is the beginning and foundation of all Evil, and inlet into all woe and miſery, and what leaves us in a moſt deplored ſtate for ever. Take a taſte, and but a taſte of this your Miſery, and then work the ſenſe of it upon your own Souls.

1. Being without Chriſt, you are deſtitute of all Good, you are without Life, without Grace, without Peace, without Pardon, without Comfort, without Righteouſneſs, without Heaven, without Salvation, *without Hope, and without God*, (as you have it in the ſame place) *Epheſ.* 2. 2. without the Favour of God, without the Preſence of God, without the Life of God, without the Image of God, without the Spirit of God; and being thus without God, you are without all true Good, and true Happineſs: According to the old and true Maxim, *Sine Summo Bono nihil Bonum*; without the chief Good there is nothing good.

2. Being without Chriſt, you are in Bondage to Sin and Satan, which is the worſt Bondage in the World. Naturally all are the Slaves and Vaſ-

ſals of theſe cruel Lords: Hence we are ſaid, *to fulfil the Devils Luſt*, Joh. 8. 44. And *as the Luſts of the Devil, ſo the Wills and Luſts of the fleſh*, Epheſ. 2. 2. *to be the Servants of Sin, and to ſerve divers Luſts and Pleaſures*, and the like: And as naturally all are thus in bondage to Sin and the Devil, ſo there is no redemption from this Bondage but by Chriſt, and that in a way of Union with him. *If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed*, ſaith he himſelf to the Jews, *John* 8. 36. They were glorying in their Priviledg, that they were *Abraham*'s Seed, and never were in Bondage to any man: True, ſays Chriſt, but ye are in a worſe Bondage than a Bondage to Man, in Bondage to Sin, in Bondage to your Luſts: For *he that committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* And this Bondage none but the Son can free you from; and therefore, until freed by him, you remain under it. O how ſore a Bondage is this, to be under the command of Sin, to be at the beck of every baſe and unclean Luſt, and to be carried captive *by the Devil at his Will!* This is ſuch a Bondage, as that the Bondage of *Iſrael* under their Taskmaſters in *Egypt*, and the Bondage of *Turkiſh* Slaves, who are kept at the Oar and Gally, is freedom to it. As to ſerve Chriſt is the greateſt Liberty, ſo to ſerve Sin is the cruelleſt Bondage.

3. Being without Chriſt, and Union with Chriſt, you are rejected of God. *Know ye not* (ſays the Apoſtle) *that except Chriſt be in you, ye are Reprobates?* 2 Cor. 13 5. *Know ye not?* As if he ſhould ſay, 'tis a moſt clear, manifeſt, and evident Truth, that unleſs you have Union with Chriſt, you are Reprobates, *i. e.* you are unapproved of God; you are out of his Favour, both your Perſons and Services are rejected by him. To the ſame purpoſe

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is that, *Gal.* 4. 22. where we read of two Mothers, and two Sons: The two Mothers were types of the two Covenants, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace, as appears by *V.* 24. The two Sons are Types of two ſorts of Perſons living in the Church; one born after the Fleſh, the other by Promiſe; one belonging to the firſt, the other to the ſecond Covenant. Well, what's the condition of theſe? Why, the one is in a ſtate of Rejection, and the other of Acceptation. They that belong to the ſecond Covenant, are owned and embraced in the Arms of Love; the other are caſt out (as you may ſee in the ſequel of the Chapter;) beſides, all our Acceptation with God, is in Chriſt, and through Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 1. 6. Out of him therefore we are in a ſtate of Rejection. O how ſad does this ſpeak your condition to be! for Men, yea, for good Men to reject and diſown us, is what may be born, eſpecially when God owns, and ſmiles: But for God to diſown and reject us, this is terrible indeed, though all the World ſhould own us, and ſmile upon us. How terrible is that Word? *Reprobate Silver ſhall Men call them; for the Lord hath rejected them*, Jer. 6. 30. If God owns, and ſmiles, 'tis no matter who frowns; but if he frowns, and rejects, who can own or ſmile to the relief of the Soul?

4. Being without Chriſt, you are under the Law, and ſo under the curſe. And how ſad is this! as there are but two Covenants, the Old and the New; and but two Heads of thoſe Covenants, the firſt, or the ſecond *Adam*; and ſo all Men do belong to, and are found in the one or the other of theſe. Whilſt therefore you are ſtrangers to Chriſt, you are under the Law; and being under the Law, you are under the Curſe: For, ſays the Apoſtle, *As many as are under the Law, are under the Curſe: For it is written,*

Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law, to do them, Gal. 3. 10. The Law has no pity, no ſparing for Offenders; but for every Breach thereof, lays the Soul under the Curſe. Now we have all broken the Law; we all broke it in *Adam*, being in him as in an Head; and we have all broken it ten thouſand times over in our own Perſons; and by both are fallen under the Curſe thereof. And, Soul, doſt thou know what the Curſe of the Law means? It carries in it Death and Condemnation for ever. Being under the Law, we are curſed in our Perſons, and curſed in our Comforts: The Wrath of God lies upon our Souls, and the Curſe of God is in all our Enjoyments; our very Bleſſings are accurſt to us, *Mal.* 2. 2. We read in Scripture, of *the People of God's Curſe*; and thou art one of them, Soul, whoever thou art, thou art out of Chriſt: O how woful, how deplorable a Condition is this!

5. Being without Chriſt, and eſtranged from Chriſt, you lie under the guilt of innumerable Sins, which you alone muſt bear for ever. 'Tis in and by Chriſt alone, that Souls are diſcharged from the Guilt of Sin. And who are they whom he diſcharges from Guilt, but ſuch as are found in him, are under a Marriage-covenant with him? Thoſe *his Blood cleanſes from all Sin*, 1 John 1. 7. *And in him have they redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveneſs of Sin*, Epheſ. 1. 7. As for others, he tells them plainly, *They ſhall die in their Sins*, John 8. 24. O how ſad a Condition is this! Soul, thou art guilty of multitudes of Sins, the leaſt of which has evil enough in it to damn thee eternally. Thou haſt thouſands, and ten thouſands of Scarlet, Crimſon Sins, Sins cloathed with black and crying Aggravations lying upon thee; and to have all theſe

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in the full weight of the Guilt and Puniſhment of them, charged upon thee by the great God for ever: How miſerable does this ſpeak thy condition to be!

6. Being eſtranged from Chriſt, you are under a neceſſity of ſinning, and ſo of great'ning your own Damnation daily. A Man out of Chriſt, does do, can do nothing but Sin; for *he is not ſubject to the Law of God, nor can he be*, Rom. 8 8. And as he is ever ſinning, ſo he is ever *treaſuring up wrath unto himſelf*, Rom. 2. 5. O how ſad a condition is this! This is, *Dura Neceſſitas*, (as *Auſtin* calls it) and ſpeaks a Man's Condition to be very doleful. To be always ſinning againſt God, and always treaſuring up Wrath to a Man's own Soul, this is next to Hell, in ſome ſort worſe. To give you the Sum of all:

Being eſtranged from Chriſt, you have nothing to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, which is ready to ſeize upon you; nothing to pacify Divine Wrath, which is ready to break forth againſt you; nothing to ſtand between Divine Revenge, and your ſinful Souls. What ſhall I ſay? You have many Accuſers, and by them many heavy Charges brought in againſt you; and being without Chriſt, you have no Advocate to plead your Cauſe, none to ſpeak a good Word in Heaven for you: And is not that ſad? you are deeply in debt, you owe your ten thouſand Talents to Divine Juſtice; and being without Chriſt, you have nothing to pay, but are in danger of being caſt into the Priſon of Eternal Darkneſs, whence there is no Redemption. And is not that ſad? You are under an Obligation to much Duty; and being without Chriſt, you are under an utter impoſſibility of performing any of it acceptably. You are under a Judgment of Condemnation, and being

being without Christ, you have nothing that can secure you one Day, one Hour, one Moment more on this side everlasting Burnings: And O how sad and miserable is this! Thus you see both your estrangement from Christ, and also your misery (in part) by reason of that estrangement. Now, as ever you would get Union and Communion with him, labour to be deeply sensible of both these.

2. Wouldst thou indeed be espoused to Christ; then labour to be soundly convinced, and deeply sensible of the greatness and hainousness of the Sin of refusing Christ, and the Offers of his Love. Poor Soul, thou standest it out against Christ; he wooes, and calls, and invites thee to himself, but thou slightest and refusest all: and this thou thinkest a small matter; but let me tell thee, this is a most hainous and crying sin: To swear, to murder, to steal, to be drunk, to be unclean, and the like; these thou lookest upon as black and horrid things: Indeed, well thou mayest, for they are sins of more than ordinary hainous and abominable Nature: But yet know that thy sin in rejecting Christ, and the Offers of his Love, is greater, and more provoking than all these: This indeed is the great Sin, and the Sin thou must in an especial manner be sensible of, if ever thou art united to Christ; So much Christ himself tells us, in that known place, *John* 16. 8, 9. *He* (says he, speaking of the Spirit whom he promised to send) *shall convince the World of Sin, because they believe not in me.* Unbelief then is the great Sin that the Spirit convinces Souls of: And what's Unbelief, but the neglect and refusal of Christ, and the Offers of his love made to us in the Gospel? He shall convince the World of Sin, because they believe not in me; *i. e. De illo magno & grandi incredulitatis peccato:* He shall convince

vince them of that grand Sin of Unbelief, (as a Learned Man expounds it:) as if Christ should say, He shall make Men see the black and hainous Nature of the Sin of rejecting me and my Love: He shall humble them for it, and set them a bleeding over it. This Sin of rejecting Christ, some of the Schoolmen have called, *Maximum Peccatum*, the greatest Sin of all: and indeed, next to the unpardonable Sin, what greater? This is a Sin most directly and immediately against Christ and the Gospel. O for a vile wretched Sinner to shut the Door of his Soul against Christ the King of Glory, and deny him entertainment, to refuse and reject the frequent Offers of him and his Love; How great a sin must this be? And, Soul, to convince thee the better of it, I shall suggest a few Considerations to thee, holding forth a little of its black and horrid Evil.

1. Consider, That the neglect and refusal of Christ and his Love, is a sin against a special and eminent Command, and therefore a great and crying sin: The greater and more eminent the Command is, which we transgress and sin against, the greater our Sin and Guilt is in transgressing that Command. Now, God does not only command us to receive and embrace Christ and his Love: But this Command of his, is a great, signal and eminent Command: So St. *John* tells us, 1 *John* 3 23. *This is his Commandment, That we believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.* What is it *to believe on the Name of Jesus Christ*, but to receive and embrace Christ offering himself in the Gospel to us, and live upon him, having so received and embraced him? Now, (says he) *This is the Commandment*, his great, his special Commandment in

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a moſt ſignal and eminent manner; and Chriſt himſelf aſſerts the ſame thing, *John* 6. 28, 29. In the 28 *Ver.* they ask him, *What ſhall we do, that we may work the Works of God?* His Anſwer in the 29 *Ver.* is, *This is the Work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent*; *i.e.* That ye receive and embrace me, and live upon me, by believing: This is [the] Work of God, the great Work which he commands you, and expects from you: Believing (as *Calvin* obſerves upon this place) is not called *the Work of God*; becauſe 'tis of God's Operation, (as you have it elſewhere) or that which God works in us; but becauſe 'tis the great thing which he commands and requires of us. To reject and refuſe Chriſt then, is a Sin againſt a ſignal and eminent Command, indeed againſt the great Command of the Goſpel; and therefore muſt needs be a great and crying Sin. More particularly;

1. The neglect and refuſal of Chriſt and his Love: is a Sin againſt a clear and expreſs Command of God, a Command wherein the Authority of God does peculiarly and eminently ſhine forth: ſo much is held forth in the place mentioned before, 1 *Joh.* 3.28. *This is his Commandment*, (ſays he, ſpeaking of the Commandment of Faith) his expreſs Commandment, a Commandment wherein his Authority is evidently and peculiarly ſeen; the Authority of God ſhines forth in all his Commands, but eſpecially in this above the reſt: Therefore this you ſee has an Emphaſis put upon it; *This is his Commandment*: Now the more clearly and eminently the Authority of God ſhines forth in any Command, the greater our Sin and Guilt is in tranſgreſſing that Command.

2. The neglect and refuſal of Chriſt and his Love, is a Sin againſt a Command, wherein the Heart

Heart of God and Chriſt does much lie, and is therefore a great Sin. This is a true Rule, That the more the mind or Heart of the Law-giver is in any Law or Command, the greater is our Sin and Guilt in the breach and tranſgreſſion of that Law or Command: Now God's Command to us, to receive Chriſt by believing, is a Command wherein his own Heart, as well as the Heart of Chriſt, does much lie: Indeed there is nothing in all the World, that the Heart of God and Chriſt is more ſet upon, or deſirous of, than this; that Souls ſhould embrace Chriſt by believing, and become one with him in a Marriage-covenant: Witneſs the freeneſs of their Offers, the frequency of their Calls, the importuneneſs of their Pleas, the patientneſs of their Waitings, the affectionateneſs of their Entreaties, the friendlineſs of their upbraidings, the patheticalneſs of their Lamentings, the ſweetneſs of their Wooings, the unweariedneſs of their Drawings, and the graciouſneſs of their Dealings in reference hereunto. But you have already ſeen, how much the Heart of Chriſt, and in him the Heart of the Father in this buſineſs. Now to tranſgreſs ſuch a Command, a Command wherein the Heart of God and Chriſt does ſo much lie, and to run counter to that which they ſo much deſire; O what a Sin muſt this needs be!

The neglect and refuſal of Chriſt, is a Sin againſt a Command, which has virtually all the Commands of God in it; and ſo in the breach and tranſgreſſion thereof, we break and tranſgreſs all. And, O how great a Sin then muſt this be? to believe on Chriſt, is comprehenſive of all that God commands and requires of us: this is ſo his Commandment, as that in obeying this, we obey all; and in violating this, we violate all; and ſo he eſteems and accounts it: This

This is evident from *John* 6. 21, 29. *What shall we do*, (say they) *that we may work the Works of God? This is the Work of God*, (says Christ) *to believe on him whom he hath sent*: Pray mark, they speak of [Works] in the Plural Number; they would know what all these Works were which God required, and what the extent of the Command was: And Christ in his Answer reduces all to one, and that is Faith, by which he shews, that as all is in vain without Faith, so Faith is virtually all that God requires: *This is the Work of God* (says he;) as if he should say, Here's all in one; to believe on, and receive me, is comprehensive of all: and accordingly, my Beloved, to reject Christ and his Love, is to break all at once, and to violate all at once; 'tis to rebel against, and pour Contempt upon the whole Mind and Will of God at once, and in effect to renounce all Duty and Allegeance to him. Suitable whereunto is the Observation of a learned Man upon that place, *Joh.* 16. 8, 9. *Christ here* (says he) *calls Unbelief* [*Sin*] *simply and absolutely, because that Sin comprehends all Sin in it.* O how great a Sin then must this be.

4. The neglect and refusal of Christ is a sin against a Command of much Love. All Gods Commands have Love in them; they are design'd by him for our God, (as the Scripture tells us;) but especially this Command of his, That we should receive and embrace his Son: For what is this Command, but a Command to us to be saved, a Command to us to be happy? What is this, but a commanding of us to live for evermore, to be eternally blessed in and with himself? And, O how great a sin must the transgression of such a Command be? Did God command us any hard or severe thing, something that tended to our prejudice, and not our

our Happineſs, that we're ſomewhat; But when he commands us nothing but to be happy, and to be happy in the beſt way; O how great a Sin muſt it be to tranſgreſs ſuch a Command!

2. Conſider; The neglect and refuſal of Chriſt is a Sin, which in a peculiar manner derogates from him, and pours great contempt upon him, and therefore a great Sin. The more contempt any Sin pours upon Chriſt, and the more he derogates from him, the greater that Sin is. Now, what Sin derogates more from Chriſt, or pours greater contempt upon him, than the neglect and refuſal of him offering himſelf to us, does? This is a Sin which takes the Crown off from Chriſts Head, and throws it in the Duſt: It every way, and in all reſpects pours great contempt upon him.

1. This Sin vilifies and pours contempt upon the Perſon of Chriſt. Chriſts Perſon is infinitely amiable, and accordingly to vilify and contemn his Perſon, muſt be a great Sin, and contract great Guilt; and this the refuſal of him, does; Hence call'd *a treading under foot the Son of God*, (which argues the higheſt contempt imaginable) *Heb.* 10. 29. Every refuſal of Chriſt carries that Language concerning him in it, *Iſa* 53. 2. *When we ſee him, there is no beauty in him, for which we ſhould deſire him: He has neither form nor comelineſs in him:* He is a Perſon of no worth, no deſirableneſs. O what contempt is this to be caſt upon Chriſt! and how much does it derogate from him!

2. This Sin vilifies, and pours contempt upon the Work, Office, and undertaking of Chriſt as Mediator, upon all that he has done and ſuffered; with all the Riches of his Grace, and his Love, manifeſted therein. Hence 'tis call'd, *as a treading of*

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the Son of God under-foot; ſo *an accounting his Blood a common and an unholy thing*, a thing of no worth, no uſe, no value, no excellency, *Heb.* 10. 29. Great, my Beloved, was the Work and Undertaking of Chriſt, as our Mediator; and great were the things which he both did and ſuffer'd in the diſcharge of that Work and undertaking; great alſo was his Grace and Love towards us in all, and accordingly, great muſt our Sin and Guilt be, in pouring contempt thereon, which we do by our refuſing of him: Hereby we pour contempt upon all his Acts, and all his Offices, as Mediator, upon all his Merits and all his Purchaſes, upon all his Grace and Love in bleeding and dying for us: We do hereby in effect ſay, that neither Chriſt, nor any thing which he has purchaſed, is worth accepting and embracing: That we had rather that he had never dyed, never become a Days man between God and us, that he might have kept his Bloud to himſelf, and we will not thank him for ſhedding of it; that we need neither him, nor any thing that is his: Hereby we do in effect ſay, that the whole Goſpel is a Cheat, a Lie, a meer Deluſion: That Chriſt is an hard Maſter, and rules with Rigour; that Salvation is little worth, and the like. O what horrid contempt of Chriſt is this!

3. This Sin plainly prefers a poor, baſe, vile Luſt, before Chriſt, and all the glorious Riches and Treaſures of Chriſt. And O, what contempt of him is this? Why do men refuſe Chriſt, and the Offers of his Love? Surely 'tis for the ſake, and from the love of ſome Luſt or other, either *the Luſt of the Fleſh*, *the Luſt of the Eye*, *or the Pride of Life*: and if ſo, then by refuſing of him, they do really prefer this Luſt before him, and all the Treaſures of his Grace and Love. And thus indeed you find it to

to be, *Mat.* 22. *begin.* as alſo *Luke* 14. 18, 19, 20. Where Chriſt offers himſelf, with all his Treaſures, to poor Sinners, who yet ſlight and refuſe both him and them. And why ſo? *The one hath a Farm, the other a Merchandize*; and all have ſome carnal Concern to mind: The ſum is, they have a Luſt to be ſatisfied; and therefore Chriſt, and all the Treaſures of his Love, muſt be rejected: By refuſing of Chriſt, we do in effect ſay, that there is more Good, more Sweetneſs, more happineſs in a Luſt, in a little carnal, worldly Pleaſure and Advantage, than there is in Chriſt, and all that is his. Hereby we do in effect ſay, that Men are deceived in Chriſt, that the Word of God makes a falſe report of him, that he is not ſuch a Saviour, nor is his Salvation ſo great as the one and the other is repreſented to be. O what contempt is this, to be caſt upon Chriſt! *Eſau* (you know) is ſaid *to deſpiſe his Birth-right*: And how? *By preferring a Meſs of Pottage, or a morſel of Meat, before it*, Gen. 25. 34. But, O how much more do we contemn Chriſt and his Love, by preferring a baſe vile Luſt before him and it? Surely, greater contempt of Chriſt than this, can't well be found. And how great then muſt the Sin of the refuſal of Chriſt be, and how much ſhould we tremble at it?

3. Conſider, That the neglect and refuſal of Chriſt is a Sin, which in an eminent manner darkens and oppoſes the Glory of God, and reflects the higheſt Diſhonour upon him of all others; and therefore a great Sin: The more any Sin darkens and oppoſes the Glory of God, the greater the guilt of that Sin is: For (firſt) the more any ſin oppoſes the Glory of God, and reflects Diſhonour upon him, the more contrary it is to the higheſt Good; and the more contrary any Sin is to the higheſt Good, the greater

er the guilt of it must needs be. And (secondly) the more any sin opposes the glory of God, and reflects dishonour upon him, the more it thwarts and contradicts the highest end of Man: and the more any Sin thwarts and contradicts the highest end of Man, the greater the guilt of that Sin is.

Now the neglect and refusal of Christ, is what eminently opposes the Glory of God, and reflects Dishonour upon him: The reception and entertainment of Christ puts an honour upon the Father. Indeed every act of Faith honours God, *Rom.* 4. 20. And especially this great and fundamental Act of Faith, in embracing Christ. So on the other hand. the neglect and refusal of Christ, is what reflects Dishonour upon God, it throws his Glory in the Dust; and hence 'tis that this Sin is so exceeding provoking to him, as in the Scripture 'tis represented to be: Particularly take here two things.

1. This Sin of refusing Christ is what slights and contemns all the glorious Excellencies and Perfections of *God* at once; and so can't but cast very great Dishonour upon him, and be very opposite to his Glory in Christ. My beloved, all the glorious Excellencies and Perfections of God are eminently manifested and displayed: In him do all the glorious Counsels of his Grace and Love meet, and in refusing him, we despise and pour contempt upon all. In him does his Love eminently shine forth, and the fulness of it rest, 1 *Joh.* 4. 9, 10. In him is Justice, Righteousness, and Holiness eminently manifested and displayed, *Rom.* 3. 25, 26. In him does his Wisdom, yea, his manifold Wisdom, appear and reveal it self: In a word, whole God is manifested and revealed in him, and withal tender'd to the embraces of our Faith and Love: In every Offer of Christ made to us in the Gospel, God does in effect

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ſay to us, Whatever I am, or can do as God, that I'll be, to do for you, to make you happy for ever: Accordingly, to refuſe Chriſt muſt needs pour contempt upon all: It ſlights and pours contempt upon the Grace of God, the Wiſdom of God, the Power of God, the Juſtice of God, the Holineſs of God, the Fulneſs and All-ſufficiency of God, and all the ancient glorious Counſels of his Love concerning Souls: To refuſe Chriſt, is in effect to ſay, That the Grace of God is no Grace, at leaſt not worthy of our acceptance; That his Juſtice and Holineſs are not to be regarded, and that we value them not: That his Wiſdom is Folly, and his Power Weakneſs; that his Fullneſs has little in it, and is no way able to ſatisfie us, and make us happy: that a broken Ciſtern is as good as that Fountain of Living Waters: And hereby we down-right deny his Faithfulneſs, and put the lie upon him, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. We do in effect ſay, that the God of Truth is a Liar, that his Witneſs and Teſtimony is not to be credited, that his Word of Promiſe is a meer Deluſion, and for no other uſe, than to beguile Souls: O what contempt, what diſhonour muſt all this caſt upon the Bleſſed God, and what horrible wickedneſs muſt it be? *To make God a lyar* (ſays a learned Man) *is an horrible and execrable impiety: thereby we take that from him which is moſt dear and proper to him.* O tremble, Soul, tremble at the blackneſs and helliſhneſs of this Sin!

2. This Sin of refuſing Chriſt, is what is directly oppoſite to the higheſt Deſign of God for his own Glory, and robs him of that Glory which is moſt dear to him. What, my Beloved, was the higheſt Deſign that ever God laid and carried on for his own Glory? Verily, 'twas Chriſt, and the Salvation of Sinners by Chriſt: He deſign'd himſelf a Revenue

nue of Glory in making the World, and he does deſign himſelf a Revenue of Glory in all he does in governing the World: But that wherein he has deſign'd the higheſt Revenue of Glory to himſelf, is, the Myſtery of Chriſt, and Salvation by Chriſt: So much is evident from *Epheſ.* 1. 11, 12, 14. *In whom* (ſays he, ſpeaking of Chriſt) *we have obtained an Inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things according to the counſel of his own Will, that we ſhould be to the praiſe of his Glory:* And again, *v.* 14. *unto the praiſe of his Glory:* The ſum is this, that God's Glory was his great end in the diſpenſation of Chriſt, and our Salvation by him; and alſo that in and by that diſpenſation he did deſign the higheſt Revenue of Glory to himſelf. For pray obſerve, firſt, he calls it, *The praiſe of his Glory*, the ſplendor and higheſt emanation of his *Glory*. (Secondly.) He repeats this Deſign of God *to the praiſe of his Glory*; and again, *to the praiſe of his Glory*; which notes this to be his grand deſign for his Glory. Again, what is that Glory that is moſt near to God? Verily, 'tis the Glory of his Grace: Grace is his darling Attribute, and the Glory of his Grace is moſt dear to him: Hence this has been peculiarly his deſign in the whole of the Myſtery of Chriſt: So the ſame Apoſtle tells us, *Epheſ.* 1. 6. Who having before ſpoken of the great Myſteries of Predeſtination and Redemption by Chriſt, here in *ver.* 6, tells you, what was God's great Deſign in all, viz. *The praiſe of the Glory of his Grace:* 'Tis the Crowning of Grace, and the enthroning of Grace, which God in a peculiar manner delights in: Now, if the higheſt deſign of God for his own Glory be by the Myſtery of Chriſt, and our Salvation by Chriſt, and the Glory of his Grace be moſt dear to him; then 'tis clear that our refuſing of Chriſt is moſt

moſt oppoſite to the higheſt deſign that God ever carry'd on for his own Glory, and Robs him of that Glory which is moſt dear to him: For alaſs! This is in effect to ſay, That God has laid out no Grace upon Sinners in the diſpenſation of Chriſt, and that he deſerves no Glory upon the account of that Diſpenſation; This is in effect to tell him, that neither his Chriſt, nor his Grace in him, is worth minding, worth receiving; and that we are no ways beholden to him for the one, or the other: And O what diſhonour muſt this reflect upon God, and how darkning to his Glory! And accordingly, Soul, let thee and I tremble at it, and at the blackneſs and horridneſs of that Sin, that has ſuch a dreadful effect.

4. Conſider, That the neglect and refuſal of Chriſt, is a Sin which directly and immediately murders the Soul, and damns it eternally, and therefore muſt needs be a great Sin: That Sin that does moſt directly and immediately murder the Soul, and deſtroy it eternally, muſt needs be a great Sin, and ſhould be greatly dreaded by us: And what Sin is it that does this, but our neglect and refuſal of *Chriſt?* And, Soul, that thou mayeſt be the more deeply convinced of this, ſeriouſly weigh theſe following Propoſitions.

Firſt, That the neglect and refuſal of Chriſt is a Sin, which rejects the only remedy of ſinful Souls: poor Sinners are in themſelves dead, loſt, undone, and periſhing for ever: they are ſick, and ſick to Death; they are ſinful, and ſinful to Damnation; and there is one, and but one Remedy for them, and that's Chriſt; Chriſt and his Blood, Chriſt and his Grace, Chriſt and his Fulneſs; beſides this, *There is no Balm in Gilead, no Phyſician there for them; neither is there Salvation in any other*, Acts 4. 14. Therefore

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by refusing and rejecting him, they refuse and reject the only remedy: He indeed is a compleat, as well as an only Remedy: He is able, and as willing, as *he is able to save to the very uttermost*, as the Scripture tells us: But they by rejecting of him, exclude themselves from his saving Efficacy, and so thereby do directly murder their own Souls.

2. That the neglect and refusal of Christ is a Sin which binds all a Man's other Sins fast to him: 'Tis a great and weighty saying which a worthy Divine has; *Unbelief* (says he, *which is properly the neglect and refusal of Christ*) *binds all a Mans Sins fast to his Soul, and Damnation fast to his Sins.* 'Tis indeed the Bond of all our Guilt and all our Misery; that which makes the Curse cleave close to us for ever: And while a Man remains in this Sin, 'tis impossible that he should be acquitted and discharged from the guilt of any one of all his Sins. 'Tis (I remember) *Austin*'s observation upon that place, *John* 16. 8, 9. Where Christ tells us, *That his Spirit shall convince the World of Sin, because they believe not in him: Christ* (says he) *instances in the sin of Infidelity in a special manner, because that sin remaining, all our other sins remain; but that being taken away, all others are forgiven.* Faith (as one of the Ancients expresses it) *delet omnia peccata*, blots out all Sins; but unbelief that binds all fast upon us: Hence that word of *Christ*, *If ye believe not, ye shall die in your Sins*, i. e. your Sins shall cleave close to you to the very Death, *John* 8. 24. This will be further evident in the next Proposition: Therefore,

3. That though all Sin be killing and damning, yet no Sin shall ever damn or destroy us, unless we add thereunto the Sin of Neglect or Refusal of Christ: 'Tis true, every Sin is damning; Sin within, Sin without: *The wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. 6. last.

laſt. And the *Apoſtle* tells us, *There is a juſt Recompence of Reward due to every Tranſgreſſion and Diſobedience*, Heb. 1. 2. But though every Sin be damning, yet whatever a Man's Sins are, though never ſo many, never ſo great; they ſhall, they can never damn him, in caſe he receives and embraces Chriſt: Nor indeed can any of all a Man's Sins be ſaid to be the immediate cauſe of his Damnation, but his refuſing of Chriſt. Indeed, under the Law, the immediate cauſe of Mans periſhing was Sin in general: But under the Goſpel, the only immediate cauſe of Mens periſhing, is the rejection of Chriſt and his Grace through unbelief: So much Chriſt himſelf tells us, in that known place, *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth on the Son, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed on the Name of the only begotten Son of God: He that believeth on Chriſt, is not condemned:* And why ſo? Is it becauſe he has no Sins to condemn him? No, but becauſe believing on Chriſt, all his Sins are done away: But *he that believeth not on him, is condenmned already:* And why? Is it becauſe he is a Sinner in general, or becauſe his Sins are many, and great Sins? No, but *becauſe he hath not believed on the Name of the only begotten Son of God.* The ſum of all is this: The immediate cauſe of Mans condemnation, is not this Sin, or that Sin, but their refuſing of Chriſt by unbelief: Hence you have it ſo frequently up and down the Goſpel; *He that believeth, ſhall be ſaved: He that believeth, not ſhall be damned*, and the like. Well then, if our refuſing of Chriſt, be the rejecting of the only Remedy of ſinful Souls; if it be what binds all a Man's Sins faſt upon him; and if none of all a Man's other Sins, though many and great, ſhould or could ever damn him, were not this Sin of refuſing Chriſt added to them; then cer-

tainly this is that Sin which does most directly and immediately murder the Soul: O how great a Sin then does this speak it to be! Murder is a great Sin, an Iniquity to be punished by the Judg; nor do we look upon a murderer fit to live: but no Murder like to Soul-murder, nor should we suffer this Soul-murderer to live one moment.

5. Consider, that the neglect and refusal of Christ is a Sin, which argues you to be really in love with your Sins, which truly and indeed chuses Death rather than Life, loves Darkness more than Light, and which leaves you without the least colour of excuse, or room of appeal for ever: And O what a black and horrid Sin must this then be! A little of each.

1. This Sin of neglecting and refusing Christ, is, what really argues you to be in love with your Sins, and to have slight thoughts of them: For Men to act Sin, is bad; but to have slight thoughts of Sin, and to be in love with it, is much worse. Sin being against an infinite Good, even infinitely contrary to the blessed God, has in a sort an infinite Evil in it: and to be in love with that which has an infinite Evil in it, O how dreadful a thing is this! Yet this your refusal of Christ carries in it: For, pray mark, had not you slight thoughts of Sin, you would not refuse the pardon of Sin when offered you, but would account it worthy of all acceptation; and were you not in love with your Sins, yea, greatly in love with them, you would not chuse and desire to continue in your Sins; much less would you refuse and reject so great a Good, as Christ is, for the sake of your Sins. Should a condemned Malefactor refuse the King's free Pardon, would not this Argue him to have slight thoughts of Death, yea, to be in love with it, and to prefer it before Life?

As

As clearly does your refuſing of Chriſt argue you to have ſlight thoughts of ſin, and to be in love with it: O were you not in love with your Sins, you would be glad of a diſcharge and deliverance from them, and would with all readineſs and joyfulneſs embrace it, when freely offered to you, as in Chriſt it is.

2. This ſin of refuſing Chriſt, is what truly and indeed ſpeaks you to love Darkneſs more than Light, and to chuſe Death rather than Life: 'Tis what prefers Sin and Death before Chriſt and Life, and Grace: O what a black Sin then muſt it be? This Chriſt himſelf aſſerts concerning it, and that as an high aggravation of it, and what makes it doubly damning, *John* 3.19. *This is the Condemnation, That Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkneſs rather than Light.* Chriſt, and the good things of Chriſt, are here called Light; on the other hand, Sin and Death, Sin and the Miſeries that attend it, are called Darkneſs: Now (ſays Chriſt) Men by unbelief, and refuſing of me, do declare, that they love this Darkneſs before this Light: Men by refuſing of me, do in effect love, chuſe, prefer Sin, and Death, and Darkneſs, before Me, and my Grace, Me and that eternal Life which I would give them: O what a ſin is this; Chriſt may truly ſay to Sinners, as *Moſes* to them of Old, *Deut.* 30. 19. *I call Heaven and Earth to record this day, that I have ſet before you Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing; therefore chuſe Life, that ye may live.* Now, for them to chuſe Death, and reject Life; to chuſe the Curſe, and reject the Bleſſing: This is a dreadful Sin indeed, and the more dreadful: On the one hand, becauſe the Light is ſo lovely and amiable; and on the other hand, the Darkneſs is ſo odious and terrible: as alſo becauſe the Obligations which lie upon us to

love; chuſe, and prefer the Light before Darkneſs, are ſo weighty and forcible; for Chriſt earneſtly deſires it, he graciouſly counſels it, he ſtrictly commands it, and no leſs than a whole Eternity of glorious and unſpeakable Happineſs depends upon it. O think of theſe things!

3. This Sin of refuſing Chriſt, is a Sin which leaves you without the leaſt colour or excuſe, or room of appeal for ever; which muſt argue it to be a great Sin indeed. First, It leaves you without the leaſt colour of excuſe; without the leaſt colour of excuſe for Sin, and without the leaſt colour of excuſe why you ſhould not die for Sin: This Chriſt himſelf is expreſs in, *John* 15. 22. *If I had not come, and ſpoken to them, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin: If I had not come and ſpoken to them,* (viz. in the Goſpel) revealing my Fathers Will, and ordering my Self and my Grace to them; *They had not had Sin*, i. e. not ſo great Sin: *But now they have no Cloak*, no excuſe *for their Sin.* Now they have no pretence to make, nothing wherewith to colour or extenuate their Sin. The neglect and refuſal of Chriſt, leaves Men altogether inexcuſable, and it will do ſo to be ſure in the laſt Day: O when God, in the Day of his Righteous Judgment, ſhall demand of Men that have lived under the Goſpel, Why they ſin, and have ſinned? why they are found in their Sins? and being found in their Sins, why they ſhould not die for ever? What will they have to ſay, by way of Excuſe or Apologie for themſelves? Verily, nothing; but will be *ſpeechleſs*, as he is ſaid to be *Mat.* 22. 12. They can't ſay, they were not warned of the Evil of Sin; they can't ſay, that Pardon and Salvation were not offered to them; they can't ſay that the Offer was not full, and free, and clear: they

they can't ſay, they had to do with an hard Maſter; nor can they ſay, that Sin is not worthy of Death: they will have nothing to ſay. *Secondly*, It leaves you without the leaſt room or place of appeal for ever. I may ſay here, as it is ſaid in another caſe, 1 *Sam.*2.25. *If one Man ſin againſt another, the Judg ſhall judg him: but if a Man ſin againſt the Lord, who ſhall intreat for him?* So if a Man ſin againſt the Law, by tranſgreſſing of it, he may appeal to the Goſpel, and the Grace of Chriſt there: But if a Man ſin againſt Chriſt and his Grace offered in the Goſpel, where then ſhall he appeal? Verily, there is no Appeal to be made, no relief to be found for him. If a Man be condemned at the Seat of Juſtice, as having ſinned againſt the Law, he may appeal unto the Mercy-ſeat, the Throne of Grace, and find ſweet Relief; but if he ſin againſt the Mercy-ſeat, and the Throne of Grace, then he has nothing to appeal to, that may adminiſter Relief to him. Now by refuſing of Chriſt, we ſin againſt the Throne of Grace; we pull down, what in us lies, the Mercy-ſeat: and where then ſhall we appeal? O conſider theſe things, and learn by them to dread this ſin of refuſing Chriſt. I might ſay much more to convince you of the hainous Evil of it; but let this ſuffice: Sure I am 'tis enough too; and had we the due ſenſe of it upon our Spirits, it would make us tremble at it for ever.

3. Wouldſt thou indeed be eſpouſed to Chriſt? Then give not way to the diſcouragement of ſenſe, but bear up thy Soul upon the Encouragements of Faith, upon ſuch Goſpel-Principles and Conſiderations, as do tend to draw Sinners to Faith in Chriſt. Poſſibly, upon reading and conſidering the woful miſery of thy Condition without Chriſt, and the dreadful hainouſneſs of thy Sin and Guilt, in thy

long and frequent refuſing of him, diſcouragements not a few may ariſe within: and indeed, no ſooner uſually does a pour Soul look towards Chriſt, or think of cloſing with him in a Marriage-covenant, but preſently multitudes of Diſcouragements ariſe to deter him therefrom. O, ſays he, what a monſtrous Sinner am I! How have I deſpiſed Chriſt and his Grace! How long have I ſtood it out againſt him! I have ſerv'd my Luſts all my days, and rejected his Calls. To what purpoſe do I now talk of cloſing with him? Theſe, and multitudes of ſuch like Diſcouragements do ariſe in the Soul; which being given way to, do effectually keep him from Chriſt: But if ever, Soul, thou wouldſt attain to Union and Communion with him, thou muſt ſhut thine Eyes and Heart too againſt all diſcouragements of this Nature; and though they preſs it upon thee again and again, yet thruſt them out, fixing thine Eye and Heart upon the Encouragements of Faith; dwell much in the thoughts of them, and bear up thy Soul upon ſuch Goſpel Principles and Conſiderations, as do tend to weaken Unbelief, and beget Faith in the Soul: And for thy help herein, I ſhall mention ſome of theſe Encouragements of Faith, or Goſpel Principles, which I would have thee to be ſerious and frequent in the contemplation of.

1. The firſt Goſpel-Principle, or Encouragement of Faith, which thou ſhouldſt bear up thy Soul upon, and be frequent in the contemplation of, is this, That there's a Rich, a Glorious, and an overflowing Fulneſs of all Good treaſured up in Chriſt for poor Sinners; and that his Grace does abundantly exceed both our Wants and Sins. 'Tis the Work and Nature of Unbelief, to little and limit the Fulneſs of Chriſt in the Eye of the Soul: It ſhews

ſhews the Soul the multitude of his Sins and Wants, but it conceals and locks up Chriſts Treaſure and Fulneſs: And, whatever we pretend, the ground of our not cloſing with Chriſt, at leaſt one principal one, is this, that we doubt of his Fulneſs, we do not ſee enough in Chriſt to ſupply all our Wants, and relieve our Diſtreſſes: Unbelief perſuading us, that Chriſt is not the Chriſt the Scripture repreſents him to be. But, Soul, away with all ſuch Apprehenſions, and dwell thou in the contemplation of Chriſts infinite Fulneſs: Look to him, as one infinitely able to ſupply thy Wants, to pardon thy Sins, to heal thy Maladies, to ſubdue thy Luſts, to ſanctify thy Heart, and to ſave thy Soul eternally: Look upon him, as the Scripture repreſents him; The Scripture tells thee, *That it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell*, Col. 1. 19. All Fulneſs of Grace and Life, all fulneſs of Peace and Pardon, all fulneſs of Righteouſneſs and Salvation: There is in Chriſt, not only a fulneſs of Abundance, but of Redundance, an overflowing Fulneſs, a Fulneſs infinitely ſuperabounding our Sins and Wants. The Scripture tells us, *That he is able to ſave unto the very uttermoſt all that come unto God by him*, Heb. 7. 25. Save, able to ſave, able to ſave to the uttermoſt; and that not one or two, but all that come unto God by him. The Scripture ſpeaks of Chriſt *unſearchable Riches*, Epheſ. 3. 8. The Ocean of his Grace is not to be ſounded by the longeſt Line of the largeſt created Underſtanding: *Paul* experienced the ſuperabounding Fulneſs of Grace, and has left it upon Record for our encouragement; 1 *Tim.* 1. 14. *The Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*; it was more than enough. I found more Grace in Chriſt (as one expreſſes it) than I knew what to do withal: And yet, what was this *Paul?* Himſelf

tells you in the verse before and after; he was a *Blasphemer, a Persecutor, and the chief of Sinners*; a Man every way of as many sins and wants as thou art. Accordingly view him, and bear up thy Soul in the Face of all Discouragements. Reason thus with thy self; True, my Condition is sad, my Wants are exceeding many, and my Sins exceeding great. But, what then? *Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no Physician there?* Is not Christ able to save me, and that to the utmost, notwithstanding all? Look, O my Soul, yonder is sweet Jesus upon the Throne, at the Fathers right Hand, full of Grace and Truth; look upon him, and consider: What are all thy Wants to his Riches and Fulness? What are all thy Miseries and Distresses to his Bowels of Mercy? What are all thy sins to the Merit of his Blood? thy Provocations to his Satisfaction? Were thy wants more and greater than they are, his Fulness could supply them all; were thy sins greater and more hainous than they are, his Blood could cleanse thee from all: *The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all Sin*, 1 Joh. 1. 7. There is infinitely more worth in his Merits to pardon and Justifie thee, than there is Evil in thy sins to damn and destroy thee: True, I have a Fountain of Sin, and Guilt, and Death in me: But here is a deeper Fountain of Grace, and Life, and Righteousness in him. See, O my Soul, see how vast and large his Treasures of Grace and Glory are, and bear up thy self upon them. O did Sinners dwell more in the view of the glorious Fulness of Christ, they would be more in love with him; and hereby would counter-work and undermine Unbelief in one of its greatest Artifices, whereby it keeps Souls from him. I shall here, for thy encouragement only, subjoyn the Saying of a worthy Divine: *Christ* (says he) *can, and it be-*

becometh him well to give more than my narrow Soul can conceive. If there were ten thouſand thouſand millions of Worlds, and as many Heavens full of Men and Angels, Chriſt would not be pinched to ſupply their Wants, and to fill them all. Chriſt is a Well of Life; but who knoweth how deep it is to the bottom?

2. The ſecond Goſpel-Principle or Encouragement of Faith which thou ſhouldſt bear up thy Soul upon, and be frequent in the contemplation of, is this; That as there is ſuch a glorious and inexhauſtible Fulneſs in Chriſt, ſo this Fulneſs is in him, not for himſelf, but to be diſpenſed and communicated to poor Souls coming to him. True (may the Soul ſay) here's Fulneſs enough, Riches and Treaſures enough of all good in Chriſt: but what's this to me, or wherein does it concern me? Wherein does it concern thee? Why, 'tis wholly thy Concern, and the Concern of ſuch as thou art: For whatever Fulneſs he has in him, 'tis treaſured up in him for Souls, for Sinners, yea, for the worſt of Sinners. How ſweet is that Word, *Pſal.* 68.18. where, ſpeaking of Chriſt, the Holy Ghoſt tells us, *That he hath received Gifts for Men: He hath received Gifts*, i. e. He has a fulneſs of all good in his hand, and at his diſpoſe, and this for Men: I but I am a Devil, (ſays the Soul) a Rebel, and what's this to me? Obſerve what folows, and thou wilt find it concerns thee, yea thee eſpecially; *He hath received Gifts for Men; yea, for the Rebellious alſo.* Hence alſo 'tis, that he is ſaid to be made *Head over all things to the Church*, Epheſ. 1. 22. *He has all Fullneſs dwelling in him*, but 'tis an Head, and ſo 'tis all for the uſe and ſervice of the Body, for every poor Soul that comes to him: And therefore 'tis added, *Head over*

all things to the Church, i. e. For the Churches Use and Service, of which he is Head. Take a view of all that Fulneſs that is in Chriſt, and 'tis all as much and as really for the uſe and ſervice of ſuch as come to him, and are made Members of his Body, as the Treaſures and Endowments of the natural Head are for the uſe and ſervice of the natural Body, and the Members thereof. And O what an Encouragement is this to Faith? 'Tis the obſervation of a Learned Man upon the place laſt quoted: *Leſt* (ſays he) *we ſhould think this great Glory of Chriſt to be a thing that does not concern us, he is here declared to be conſtituted and appointed by the Father to be the Head of the whole Church.* Well then, Soul, bear up thy ſelf upon this Encouragement; ſay, look, O my Soul, look unto ſweet Jeſus, who hath received Gifts for Men: View him as one that has received a fulneſs of all Grace from the Father, on purpoſe to be diſpens'd and communicated to thee, and ſuch as thou art. He has Life in him, and he has it for thee; he has Peace and Pardon in him, and he has it for thee; he has Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, Grace and Glory in him, and he has it for thee, and ſuch as thou art; and therefore go to him, expect all from him.

3. The third Goſpel-Principle or Encouragement of Faith, which thou ſhouldſt bear up thy Soul upon, and dwell much in the contemplation of, is this; That there is a perfect freedom and willingneſs in Chriſt, yea, 'tis even Genuine and Natural to him to beſtow himſelf, with all his glorious Riches and Fulneſs, upon poor Souls coming to him. Chriſt (as you heard) has all this Fulneſs in him as an Head; ſo you have it expreſly, *Col.* 1. 18, 19. Now as 'tis genuine and natural to the

Head

Head to miniſter Influence to the Members; ſo 'tis even genuine and natural to Chriſt to communicate his Grace to poor Souls. Beſides, all that Fulneſs that is in Chriſt, 'tis in him not as God only, but as Man: 'Tis depoſited and treaſured up in his Humane Nature: *It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, Col. 1. 19. *In him*, i. e. (as a Learned Man expounds it) *in the Man Chriſt, or in that Humane Nature in which he died and tranſacted the Buſineſs of our Salvation.* 'Tis true, the Godhead or Divine Nature, is the firſt Spring or Fountain of all Grace; but the Humane Nature of Chriſt is, as it were, a ſecond Spring and Fountain of Grace, that is, a Treaſury or Storehouſe, wherein all Grace is laid up for us. Hence 'tis ſaid, *That as the Father hath Life in himſelf, ſo he hath given to the Son to have Life in himſelf; becauſe he is the Son of Man*, Joh. 5. 26, 27. Chriſt as God hath Life, *i. e.* all Grace originally and independently in him, as the Father hath: Indeed as God, he is the ſame infinite and independent Fountain of Life and Grace with the Father: But 'tis as Man that he is ſaid to have Life and Grace given to him. The Sum then is, That that glorious Fulneſs of Grace that is in Chriſt for Sinners, is fountain'd up in his Humane Nature. And being fountain'd up in his Humane Nature, it will, and can't but flow, yea, overflow too, upon poor Souls that caſt themſelves upon him. The truth is, 'Tis to charge Chriſt with unkindneſs and unfaithfulneſs both at once, to ſuppoſe him unwilling to communicate Himſelf and his Fulneſs to Sinners coming to him. And, Soul, canſt thou find in thy Heart to lay ſo black a Charge upon ſo ſweet and good a Chriſt? 'Tis the Way and Work of the Devil and Unbelief, to perſwade Souls, that Chriſt will not receive them, nor communicate his Grace

and

and Fulneſs to them, though they ſhould come to him; which they endeavour to do, from the conſideration of his Greatneſs and Holineſs, together with their Vileneſs and Sinfulneſs. Chriſt, ſay they, is choice and peculiar in his Love and Reſpects, as great Perſons uſe to be: He will know his diſtance, and he will make Sinners know theirs: But, Soul, deal with this, as from the Devil and Unbelief; reject it as a Reproach thrown upon Chriſt, and dwell much in the contemplation of his infinite willingneſs to receive and ſave the worſt of Sinners that come to him. Reaſon it a little with thy ſelf: Why did he become Incarnate? Why did he bleed and die? Why does he woo, and wait, and offer, and call, and ſtrive with poor Sinners to win them to himſelf? Does it not all argue a willingneſs and readineſs in him to give forth, both himſelf and his Fulneſs to them?

4. The fourth Goſpel-Principle, or Encouragement of Faith, which thou ſhouldſt bear up thy Soul upon, and dwell much in the contemplation of, is this: That the only Spring and Principle of all that ever Chriſt does for poor Sinners, from firſt to laſt, is from his own Sovereign Grace and Love. 'Twas his Love that brought him down from Heaven, and that led him out to bleed and die for them. Hence, *Epheſ.* 5. 25. he is ſaid *to love his Church, and give himſelf for it.* 'Tis his Love, his free Love, that firſt draws them to himſelf, and allures them into Covenant with him: *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love; therefore with loving kindneſs have I drawn thee*, Jer. 31. 3. It is his Love that receives them, that pardons them, that beſtows Life and Salvation upon them. Hence all is ſaid to be of Grace, even the whole of our Salvation, *Epheſ.* 2. 8. Hence he is repre-

repreſented to us as ſitting upon a Throne of Grace, and there 'tis that he invites us to come to him, and from thence gives out all to us, *Heb* 4. 16. and therefore to that Throne we, thoſe Sinners, may come boldly: He is upon a Throne, and therefore we may aſſure our ſelves that he will do great things for Sinners coming to him: He will act like a King, pardon like a King, ſave like a King; do all with Kingly Greatneſs and Magnificence. And it is a Throne of Grace, a Throne that reigns Grace, a Throne whereon Grace ſits in Imperial Majeſty, and decrees all for poor Sinners coming to it; and ſo does all freely, all in a way of ſovereign Grace and Love: Hence that Language, *I will have Mercy, becauſe I will have Mercy*; I will pardon, becauſe I will pardon; I will ſave, becauſe I will ſave. Now, what an encouragement is this to Faith; and how, if rightly weighed and conſidered, would it daſh all the Pleas of Unbelief to pieces, and ſweetly draw the Soul on to a cloſe with Chriſt in a Marriage-covenant? For pray conſider, What is the Nature of a ſovereign Grace and Love? The nature of it, is to act from it ſelf to it ſelf, without any conſideration of any thing in us, without reſpecting either the worthineſs or the unworthineſs of the Creature at all. The nature of it is ſuch, that 'tis neither conſtrained to, nor reſtrained from doing good to Souls, by any thing either of good or evil in them; but all runs freely: And therefore no matter what I am, though never ſo vile and wretched in my ſelf, while I have to do with ſuch Love; and ſuch Love is the Spring of all Chriſts Dealings with me, and Carriages towards me.

5. The fifth Goſpel-Principle, or Encouragement of Faith, which thou ſhouldſt bear up thy ſelf upon, and

and dwell much in the contemplation of, is this: That the great Design of Christ in all his Undertakings for, and Dispensations towards Sinners, is the illustrating and enthroning of his own Grace; and the more vile, sinful, and forlorn a Wretch thou art, the more will his Grace be enthroned and illustrated in thine acceptance with him. Christ in his dealings with, and for Sinners, does not only act from a Principle of Soveraign Grace, but in all he carries on a Design to enthrone that Grace of his, and to make it glorious for ever; yea, and he acts, and will act suitably to such a Design. 'Tis not what such and such Sinners do, or do not deserve, (says Christ) that I am to mind, but what my Grace can do for them, and what will make most for the Glory of that Grace, what will set the brightest Crown upon its Head: This is evident, *Ephes.* 1. 6, 12, 14. which was opened before upon another occasion: Hence those whom he saves, he saves in such a way, as may most lift up his own Grace, his Design therein being, *that Grace might reign*, as you have it *Rom.* 5. 21. Hence you read of his *justifying the Ungodly*, Rom. 4. 5. He will have his Grace triumph over every Soul whom he saves. Now what an encouragement is this to Faith? Christ not only sits upon a Throne of Grace, but also his design in dealing with Sinners, is to set his Grace upon the Throne. Sinner, the more vile and sinful thou art, the more suitable it is to Christ's Design to save thee; for the more vile and sinful thou art, the greater Name and Glory will his Grace get in thine Acceptation and Salvation by him: The more vile and sinful thou art, the greater will be the Declaration of Grace on Christ's part in thine Acceptance and Salvation. O when Christ shall pardon a Soul so guilty, receive a Soul so sinful, reconcile a Soul that

that is ſuch an Enemy as thou art; how will this declare the glorious Riches of his Grace, in the view both of Men and Angels? This will *ſhew forth the exceeding Riches of his Grace*, as the expreſſion is, *Epheſ.* 2. 7. And the more vile and ſinful thou art, the greater will be the Admiration of Grace for ever on thy part: Where much is forgiven, there will be the return of much Love, much Praiſe, *Luke* 7. 47. O who am I (ſays the Soul, when once received to Mercy, though more than ordinary vile and ſinful) who am I, that I ſhould find Grace in Chriſts ſight? What, ſuch a Rebel, and yet pardon'd? Such an Enemy, and yet reconcil'd? Such a black Devil, and yet waſht, and made white in the Blood of the Lamb? Such a Fiend of Hell, and yet made a Favourite of Heaven? Such a filthy deformed Wretch, and yet taken into the pure and lovely Boſom of ſweet *JESUS?* O Grace, Grace! How rich and free is Grace? and O what praiſe and *Hallelujahs* will there be tuned upon the Tongues and Spirits of ſuch to God and the LAMB for ever? When therefore thou wouldſt go to Chriſt, and diſcouragements ariſe to keep thee back from him, thou ſhouldſt dwell in the thoughts of, and bear up thy Soul upon this conſideration, reaſoning thus with thy ſelf; True, I am a vile Wretch, the chief of Sinners, one on all accounts worthy to be abhorred, and caſt off by Chriſt: But what then? Chriſt acts towards Sinners, purely from a Principle of Grace and Love; he regards neither Worthineſs, nor Unworthineſs; whether a great Sinner or a little Sinner, 'tis all one to him as to his accepting of me. Moreover, his Deſign is to crown his Grace, and render that glorious; and the more vile I am, the more that Deſign of his will take in mine Acceptation and Salvation: How vile therefore

fore ſoever I am, I will caſt my ſelf upon him, and put in for an Eſpouſal with him.

6. The ſixth Goſpel-Principle, or Encouragement of Faith, which thou ſhouldſt bear up thy ſelf upon, and dwell much in the contemplation of, is this: That 'is the Glory and Perfection of Chriſt, as Mediator, to receive Sinners, and to give out himſelf and his Fulneſs to them, when they come to him. This, if rightly weighed, will mightily help on Faith, and liſt the poor Soul over his Diſcouragements, into the Boſom and Embraces of *Jeſus Chriſt*. To underſtand it aright, you muſt know, that Chriſt has a two-fold Glory and Perfection; The Glory and Perfection of his Perſon, as he is the Son of God: and the Glory and Perfection of his Office, as he is Mediator and Head of the Second Covenant. The Glory and Perfection of his Perſon, as the Son of God, that is infinitely compleat and full, that admits neither of diminution nor augmentation, being unchangeably the ſame for ever. But the Glory and Perfection of his Office, as Mediator, that in a great meaſure ariſes from his receiving Sinners, and beſtowing himſelf and his Grace upon them when they come to him; and the more Sinners he receives, and the more Grace he gives out to them, the greater his Glory and Perfection in this reſpect is: And it may be truly ſaid, that Chriſt in receiving and giving out Grace to Sinners, when they come to him, does increaſe the Revenue of his own Glory, and more and more compleat and perfect himſelf, as Head and Mediator; Hence the Church is called *his Fulneſs*, Epheſ. 1. 3. *God gave him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is his Body, the fullneſs of him that filleth all in all.* Now, if the Church is Chriſts Fulneſs, then the

the more that is filled and compleated by his receiving Sinners to himſelf, and giving out Grace to them; the more full and compleat he himſelf, as to his Mediatory Honour and Perfection, grows: Hence alſo Saints are ſaid to be *the Glory of Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.*8.23. As Chriſt alone is their Glory, ſo they alſo are his Glory: And how his Glory? Not only becauſe they do, or ſhould actually glorifie him, but alſo becauſe he has received them, and laid out his Grace upon them, and it is his Grace only that ſhines forth in them. Hence that Obſervation of *Calvin* upon the place, *They* (ſays he) *that excel moſt in Grace and Holineſs, they peculiarly are the Glory of Chriſt; becauſe they have nothing but by free Gift from Chriſt.* Hence alſo Chriſt tells us, that *he is glorified in them*, John 17.10. And he ſays expreſly, *That the Spirit ſhall glorifie him, becauſe he ſhall receive of his, and give it unto us*, John 16. 14. By all which it appears, that 'tis the Glory and Perfection of Chriſt, as Mediator, to receive Sinners coming to him, and to beſtow himſelf and his Grace upon them. In ſhort, my Beloved, all that ever Chriſt has done for, and is made of God to poor Sinners; all his Acts, and all his Offices, as Mediator, do receive their ultimate Perfection in their full Influences on us and our Salvation. And as Chriſt receives his Name and Denomination of a Saviour, from his Relation too, and acting for poor Sinners to redeem and ſave them; ſo the Perfection of this Office, and thoſe Acts of his, do lie in the full accompliſhment of our Salvation: And indeed, they would all be but vain and weak Acts, ſhould he not fully ſave us coming to him. O what Encouragement is here to Faith, and how muſt Unbelief ſink and die before this Conſideration, if rightly improved! True, (may the Soul ſay) I am vile, ſinful, and unworthy,

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but 'tis the Honour of Christ to receive me; 'tis his Glory to bestow himself and his Grace upon me; 'tis his Perfection, as Mediator, to accept and save me, and such as I am; and therefore why should I be discouraged? I will go to him, and cast my self upon him. Thus bear up your Souls upon, and encourage your Faith with these Gospel-Principles, which is greatly necessary, and will not a little conduce to an Espousal between Christ and you.

4. Wouldst thou indeed be espoused to Christ? Then take heed of all Jealousies of him, and Prejudices against him; and be sure ever to maintain right thoughts of him. One of the great Designs of Satan, and one of the most cursed workings of Unbelief, is to prejudice Souls against Christ, and to fill them with hard jealous thoughts of him; which if they can prevail in, they infallibly keep the Soul from closing with him in a Marriage-covenant. If a Woman has Jealousies and hard Thoughts of a Man, and be filled with Prejudices against him, she is never like to enter ento a Marriage-covenant with him. And no more will a Soul close with Christ in a Marriage covenant, as long as he is filled with hard Thoughts of him, and Prejudices against him: Watch therefore against this. The Devil, together with the unbelief of our own Hearts, will frame up a thousand strange Notions and Representations of Christ in the Soul, thereby to prejudice us against Christ; but take heed of all these, and be sure to maintain right Thoughts and Apprehensions of him. Particularly here take only two things.

1. Be sure to maintain honourable Thoughts of his Person: Look upon him as a Person of Glory, and as having all Excellencies in him. 'Tis the Work and Nature of Unbelief, to darken and obscure

ſcure the Perſon of Chriſt, to make that appear vile and contemptible in the eye of the Soul, whereby it does effectually ſtrengthen it ſelf within him: and indeed, there is nothing more prevalent to keep the Soul from Chriſt, than an Ignorance of, or Prejudice againſt his Perſonal Worth and Excellencies. This was that which made the Jews ſo generally reject him: *They ſaw no Beauty in him for which they ſhould deſire him, nor did they diſcern Form or Comelineſs in him*; and therefore rejected him, *Iſa.* 53. 1, 2. They look'd no further than the outward Form, the Veil of his Fleſh; they ſaw not his Divine Beauty and Glory, and ſo deſpiſed him. And, my Beloved, unleſs we look within this Veil, and come to view and contemplate him, as a Perſon of Glory, we alſo ſhall reject him to our eternal Perdition. Pray obſerve, 'tis the Perſon of Chriſt that puts Worth and Virtue in all his Doings, and all his Sufferings; all his Offices, and all his Promiſes: 'Tis the Worth and Excellency of his Perſon, that makes his Blood ſo precious, his Promiſes ſo ſweet, his Righteouſneſs ſo glorious, his Grace ſo efficacious, his Love ſo endearing: 'Tis the Worth and Excellency of his Perſon, that gives Authority to all the Commands of Faith, and does awe the Heart to Obedience; and 'tis the Worth and Excellency of his Perſon that is one of the moſt powerful Attractives to draw and allure the Hearts of the Sons of Men to him: if therefore his Perſon be undervalued, if the Dignity and Glory of that be not ſeen, we are never like to enter into a Marriage-covenant with him. Therefore, Soul, if ever thou wouldſt be eſpouſed to this Chriſt, always maintain honourable Thoughts of his Perſon: *Behold his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten of the Father*, and beg him more and more to reveal his Perſonal Worth and Excellencies to thee.

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2. Be ſure always to maintain good Thoughts of his Ways, Kingdom, and Government: Admit not of one Jealouſie of Chriſt, as if he were an hard, ſevere Husband; as if he carried it with Rigour and ſeverity towards his Spouſes: If the Devil and Unbelief fail in their other Attempts, then they endeavour to prejudice Souls againſt Chriſt, perſwading them that he is an hard Maſter, an auſtere Husband, that rules with intolerable rigor and ſeverity: I know, ſays he in the Goſpel, *that thou waſt an auſtere man*, Mat. 25. 24. And hereby the Soul is ſcared off from Chriſt. But, Soul, as ever thou wouldſt be eſpouſed to him, take heed of any ſuch Jealouſie of him, or Prejudice againſt him, keeping up good Thoughts of Him and his Ways, Him and his Government; and be much in contemplating the ſweetneſs both of him and his Ways. Is he ſevere? Pray where lies his ſeverity? Does he call you to bear his Yoak? He does, but 'tis an eaſie Yoak: Does he enjoyn you to bear his Burthen? He does, but it is a light Burthen: *My Yoak is eaſie, and my Burthen is light*, Mat. 11. 29. 30. Does he expect you ſhould take take up the Croſs? He does, but it is a ſweet Croſs, a gainful Croſs, an honourable Croſs, a Croſs that is inlaid with Love, and overlaid with Divine ſweetneſs; a Croſs that has a *Crown* annext to it, even a *Crown of Life*, Rev. 2. 10. A Croſs that is a *Crown* here; for 'tis an honour to ſuffer for Chriſt, *Acts* 5. 41. And a *Croſs* that will greaten and brighten that our *Crown* hereafter, *Mat.* 5. 11, 12. *Bleſſed are ye, when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you; for great is your reward in Heaven.* Does he call you to perform ſuch and ſuch ſervices? He does, but withal he gives you ſtrength to perform them, *helping your Infirmities by his good Spirit*, Rom. 8. 26. and in caſe you fail, and come ſhort in and

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of what he calls for. What then? Why then, he *pities and ſpares you, as a Father doth his Son that ſerveth him*; he over-looks your Failings and Defects, *Mal.* 3.17. Can you do nothing, only you have a mind to ſerve him? Why then, he *accepts of that willing mind according to what you have, and not according to what you have not*, 2 Cor. 8. 12. When you can't pour out a Prayer, a Sigh, a Groan is accepted by him. Will he have the Throne in you, and rule in your Souls? He will; but this way of rule is moſt ſweet; for he rules with Love, and he rewards with Life; and he gives a Throne for a Throne, a Throne in Glory for a Throne in your Souls: What ſhall I ſay? *His ways are all ways of pleaſantneſs, and his paths are all peace*, Prov. 3 17. And O what pleaſure, what delight, what ſolace and ſatisfaction of Soul is there to be found in walking in them! In a word, his whole ſervice is perfect Freedom, and there is no true Freedom but in his Ways and Service. 'Tis a great ſaying which I have read in one of the Ancients, *Who* (ſays he) *would not Reign? But wouldſt thou reign happily? Serve kind Jeſus, and thou ſhalt reign, becauſe to ſerve him is true reigning.* Thus you ſee, there is no juſt reaſon for hard Thoughts of Chriſt in this reſpect, but rather the contrary: Accordingly anſwer, and throw off all thoſe black reproaches, which the Devil and Unbelief caſt upon this good Lord; and be ſure to maintain good Thoughts of him, and his Ways, which will not a little conduce to the promoting of an Eſpouſal between him and thee.

5. Wouldſt thou indeed be eſpouſed to Chriſt? Then ſtudy and contemplate much how infinitely grateful and acceptable Chriſt is: Sinners know not, or if they know, they conſider not, who, or what Chriſt is; they mind not how acceptable a Good

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he is to Souls; and therefore they ſlight him: *Hadſt thou known*, ſays Chriſt to the Woman, *the Gift of God, and who it is that ſpeaketh to thee, thou wouldſt have askt him, and he would have given thee living Waters*, Joh. 4. 10. Truly did Men know Chriſt, and his infinite Acceptableneſs, they would run to him, and cloſe with him in a Marriage-covenant: Study therefore and contemplate this much, thereby poſſeſſing thy Soul with a deep ſenſe of it. The Apoſtle ſpeaking but of one truth concerning Chriſt, tells us, it is *worthy of all Acceptation*, 1 Tim. 1. 16. And if ſo, what Acceptation muſt Chriſt himſelf, yea Chriſt, with all his Truths, and all his Treaſures both, be worthy of? And how ſhould our Souls cleave to him, and take him into our Embraces? There are, among others, five things which ſpeak a Good to be eminently grateful and acceptable: Worth and Excellency; Uſefulneſs and Serviceableneſs; Suitableneſs and Conveniency; Sweetneſs and Delight; Durableneſs and Unchangeableneſs in all; all which are found in Chriſt, who tenders himſelf and his Love to us.

1. There is worth and Excellency in Chriſt, yea, incomparable Worth and Excellency. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of an excelling Excellency that there is in the knowledg of Chriſt, *Phil.* 3. 8. Now the knowledg of Chriſt is ſo excellent, becauſe Chriſt is excellent: Chriſt indeed is all Worth, all Excellency: He is an infinit Ocean of Beauty and Glory; *he is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, and altogether lovely*, Cant. 5. 10, 16. All Excellencies dwell in him, as in their proper Fountain; and they all meet and are united in him, as Lines in their proper Centre. Some Beauty, ſome Excellencies you find ſcattered up and down among the Creatures; the Saints, and Angels, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and the like: But

But alas! 'tis ſcattered, and 'tis ſcattered but here and there a drop; but in Chriſt you have all Beauty, all Worth, all Excellency in a bleſſed Union and conjunction: You have all in one, and that unchangeably. O what a Portion is Chriſt (ſays one); O that the Saints would dig deeper into the Treaſures of his Wiſdom and Excellencies. Truly 'tis ſweet digging there; and there, in ſome ſort, there will be room for digging to all Eternity; for even through Eternity new Wonders of Glory will ariſe, new Beauties and Excellencies will appear, and ſhine forth in Chriſt. What ſhall I ſay? He has in him all the Excellencies of both Worlds; and is indeed deſervedly the Wonder of both: In him there is a confluence of all the lovely Properties, the drawing Attributes, the raviſhing Beauties, the bright ſhining and Glorious Perfections of the infinitely Bleſſed Deity: Hence, ſays he, *all that the Father hath, is mine*; which may be underſtood of his Divine Perfections, *John* 16. 15. Hence alſo he is ſaid to be *equal with God*, Phil. 2. 6. i. e. *Look, what-ever Divine perfections there are in God the Father, they all are found in Chriſt: In him is expreſt the whole Perſon of the Father, the whole Eſſence, Being, and Beauty of the Father*: And (as a Learned Man has obſerved); *Chriſt the Son is in all things like the Father; this only excepted, that he is not the Perſon of the Father.* Hence alſo he is ſaid to be *the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the Expreſs Image of his Perſon*, Heb. 1. 3. All the Father's Glories and Excellencies do ſhine forth in him, and he perfectly repreſents the Father to us. Thus Chriſt is a perſon of Excellency; and ſo moſt acceptable. And O who would not accept and embrace ſuch a Chriſt? And how great a wickedneſs is it to reject him? I can't but here take up the complaint of an Holy Man: 'O pity, pity for evermore

'more (says he) that there should be such an one 'as Christ Jesus, so boundless, so bottomless, so incomparable, so infinite in excellency and sweetness, and so few that will take him: they miserably 'lose their love (says he) who will not bestow it 'upon this lovely one.

2. There is usefulness and serviceableness in Christ. As Christ is a Person of the highest Excellency, so of the greatest and most absolute Need, Use and Service to poor Souls: Indeed he is *the one needful Good*, Luk.10.42. Christ is so much needed by, and of so much use and service to poor Souls, that they can't possibly do well and be happy without him. Pray consider we provoke God, and he is angry with us; and by Christ alone 'tis, that we *receive the Atonements*, Rom. 5. 11. We Sin, and load our selves with Guilt; and by Christ alone 'tis, that we are or can be discharged from it: *In him have we redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveness of sins*, Eph.1.7. We have an hard and impenitent Heart, an Heart that cannot repent; and by Christ, and Christ alone 'tis, that we can obtain repentance, *he being exalted to give repentance unto Israel, as well as remission of sins*, Act. 5. 31. We are at a dreadful distance from God: *a far off* (as the Scripture speaks) and by Christ and him alone 'tis, that *we are made nigh*. What shall I say? The best of Saints, as well as the worst of Sinners, have an absolute need of Christ, and he is of daily use and service to them; neither can they live one day, or one hour without him: Indeed he is their Life, and without him therefore they are dead and undone, as well as others: *without him they can do nothing*, Joh.15.5. Without him every Duty will be too hard, every Burthen will be too heavy, every Temptation will be too strong, every Lust will be too mighty

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for them; without him they would yet fall ſhort of the Eternal Reſt, and would make ſhip-wrack of Faith, Souls, and all for ever. Without him neither Saints, nor Sinners can have any acceſs to God, any entercourſe or communion with him, in which, notwithſtanding, the whole of our happineſs, both in time and eternity, lies. *I am the Way*, (ſays he) *and no man cometh to the Father but by me*, Joh. 14. 6. *And through him*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *we have acceſs unto the Father by one Spirit*, Eph. 2. 18. Without him we could have no peace with God; *for he alone is our Peace*, Eph. 2. 14. And having peace with *God*, without him we could not maintain our Peace one hour, it being he alone that is *our Advocate and Propitiation with the Father*, 1 Joh. 2, 1, 2. Thus he is every way moſt needful, and moſt uſeful to Eternal Souls. O how grateful, how acceptable then is he, and ought he to be to us!

3. There is ſuitableneſs and conveniency alſo in Chriſt to the Souls of Men: The ſuitableneſs and conveniency of any Good renders it acceptable to us. How acceptable is Bread to an hungry Man, becauſe a Good ſuitable to him? How acceptable is Drink to a thirſty Man, becauſe a Good ſuitable to him? Now there is an admirable ſuitableneſs and conveniency in Chriſt to the Souls of Men, and that in all the caſes of them: Why then ſhould he not be acceptable to them? One (I remember) repreſents the ſuitableneſs of Chriſt to the Souls and wants of Sinners thus; the whole Perſon, Nature, and Offices of Chriſt (ſays he) are ſo ſuited and proportioned to all the variety of Needs in us, that they are as a Key for a Lock, there is Ward for Ward, every thing done in the Key ſuitable to the Lock: and indeed ſo 'tis here, Chriſt and his Fulneſs being exactly ſuited to us and our Wants: We

are ſick, and ſick to Death, and Chriſt is a Phyſician, *Mat.* 9. 12. And what more ſuitable to the ſick than a Phyſician? We are ſinful, and ſinful to Damnation; we are loſt Sinners, and Chriſt is a Saviour; and who, or what more ſuitable to loſt Sinners than a Saviour? We are poor Captives, the Captives of Sin and Satan, in bondage to Death and the Curſe; and Chriſt is a Redeemer; and who or what more ſuitable to Captives than a Redeemer? We are under the Tyranny and Uſurpation of many mighty powerful Luſts, Luſts that are impoſing upon us every Hour; and we are no ways able to deal with them. But Chriſt is a great and puiſſant King, who can ſubdue all, and whoſe Arrows ſhall be ſharp in the Hearts of all his and our Enemies; and what more ſuitable to Perſons in ſuch a circumſtance than ſuch a King? We are Dead, and Chriſt is Life; and what more ſuitable for the Dead than Life? We are poor and miſerable, and Chriſt is Gold to enrich us. Are we naked? Chriſt is Cloathing for us. Are we blind? He is Eye-ſalve for us: Are we in Priſon? He is Liberty: Are we Hungry? He is Bread: Are we Thirſty? He is the Water of Life, which thoſe that drink of, ſhall never thirſt: Are we troubled? He is Reſt: Are we drooping and deſponding? He is the Conſolation of *Iſrael*: Are we bewilder'd? He is a Guide: Are we born down in our ſpiritual Conflicts? He is the Captain of our Salvation, who will fight for us. O how ſuitable every way is Chriſt to Souls, and being ſo ſuitable, why ſhould he not be acceptable to us: Poor Sinner! is there any in Heaven or Earth that will ſo ſuit and anſwer the various Wants and Caſes of thy Soul, as Chriſt does and will? Why then ſhouldſt thou not account him worthy of all acceptation?

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4. There is ſweetneſs and delight in Chriſt: *Trahit ſua quemque voluptas*, (ſays the Poet) every one is drawn and allur'd by pleaſure and delight. What is it that makes Sin, that curſed thing Sin, pleaſing and grateful to ſo many? Surely one great thing is, that Pleaſure and Delight which they find, at leaſt promiſe themſelves to find in it. And indeed generally, the more ſweet and delightful things are, the more readily and greedily they are embraced by the Sons of Men: Why then ſhould not Chriſt be grateful and acceptable to us? Is there any ſo ſweet, ſo pleaſant, ſo delightful as he? He is a Fountain of Sweetneſs, as well as Excellency. *I find him ſo ſweet* ſays an Holy Man, ſpeaking of Chriſt) *that my Love, ſuppoſe I would charge it to remove from him, it would not obey me.* How ſweet is his Love! *Thy Love is better than Wine*, ſays the Spouſe, *Cant.* 1. 2. *This is that beſt Wine which goeth down ſweetly, cauſing the Lips of thoſe that are aſleep to ſpeak*, Cant. 7.9. Yea, this is that will cauſe a dead Man to ſpeak and live, as an Holy Man ſpeaks concerning it. Experienced Souls will tell you, that there is more ſweetneſs in one deſcent of Love from Chriſt, than in all the delights of Sin and the Creature. This is that which ſweetens the ſharpeſt Affliction; yea, this is that, and that alone, which ſweetens Death it ſelf, and enables the Soul truly to triumph over it, *Rom.*8. *latter end.* O the ſweet bathing that there is in the Fountain of Chriſts Love! How ſweet are his Fruits? *I ſat down under his Shadow*, ſays the Spouſe, *with great delight, and his Fruits were ſweet to my taſte*, Cant. 2. 3. By Fruits, I underſtand the Purchaſe of his Blood, and the Effects of his Love, Peace, Pardon, Righteouſneſs, Juſtification, Sanctification, and Holineſs, acceptance with God, and the like. And O how ſweet are theſe! How pleaſant

are these! With what solace and satisfaction may a believing Soul feed and feast himself upon these! How sweet is his Presence, Entercourse, and Communion with him! This made the Spouse to *be glad, and rejoice in him, Cant.* 1.4. This indeed sets the Soul down at the very Gate of Heaven, where he says, 'tis good to be here. 'Tis a blessed Exclamation which I find one of the Ancients break out into; *O how good, and how sweet! O how good and how pleasant is it, to dwell with thee, most sweet Jesus; to converse with thee, to reveal the concerns of our Souls to thee, and to enjoy thy Consolations!* And again elsewhere; *O thou most sweet and most loving Jesus, how sweet is it to think of thee! for while we are speaking and thinking of thee, thou art sweetly present with us, and our Souls are filled with delight in the Odours of thine Ointments.* And yet once more; *O Lord, when at any time I partake in this Joy,* (speaking of the Joy of Communion with him) *I cry out, Lord, 'tis good to be here; let us build three Tabernacles here, one for Faith, one for Hope, one for Love.* And indeed who is there that knows what Communion with Christ means, that does not find an incomparable sweetness, solace and satisfaction in it? This is that which fills some with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, even here; and this is that which will be the Joy and Delight of Heaven for ever: Every way Christ is a very Field of Pleasure, a very Paradise of Joy, and a very Fountain of Delight: O why, why then should he not be more graceful and acceptable to us?

5. There is durableness and unchangeableness in Christ; which being added to all the former, renders him even infinitely the more grateful and acceptable; possibly some worth, some usefulness, some suitableness, some sweetness and delight there may be found in the Creature, and Creature-enjoyments; but

but alas, this allays the acceptableneſs of all, that 'tis all fading, dying, and changing: and indeed, whatever is ſhort, and but for a ſeaſon, can't challenge any great acceptation. But now, Chriſt he is laſting, durable, and unchangeable; *He is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13.8. What he was, he is, and what he is, he always will be; he was moſt excellent, moſt uſeful, moſt ſuitable, moſt ſweet and delightful to Souls; and ſo he is, and always will be. *He* (as one of the Ancients ſpeaks of him) *is immutable, he changes all things, but is himſelf unchangeable, never new, never old.* Hence alſo Chriſt himſelf tells us, That *he is the Alpha and Omega, he that was, and is, and is to come*, Rev. 1.8. He is ever the ſame in Love, in Beauty, in Fulneſs, in Faithfulneſs, and in all his Deſirableneſſes. And O how grateful and acceptable does this render him! All our Enjoyments here below fade and change; yea, we our ſelves change; *Changes and War are upon us*, as *Job* ſpeaks; yea, ſome of us are daily waiting for our laſt and great change: But O! bleſſed be God, Chriſt fades not, Chriſt changes not: What he was to, and what he has done for Souls formerly, that he is to, and that he can do for Souls now; yea, and that he will be to, and will be able to do for Souls hereafter: for he is ſtill to come; as he was and is, ſo he is to come, which is a ſweet word. Poor Soul, hitherto it may be thou haſt gone along through thy Work and Warfare with ſome comfort and courage; but that which damps and terrifies thee, is the apprehenſion of what may be to come. O ſayeſt thou, the Trials that are to come, the Difficulties that are to come, the Temptations that are to come, the Storms and Tempeſts that are to come! Well, Soul, for thy Encouragement under all, know, that whatever is to come Chriſt is to come too. Are there Trials to come? Chriſt is to

come too: Are there Difficulties and Temptations to come? Christ is to come too: Are there Storms and Tempests to come? Christ is to come too: And while Christ is to come, fear not, only close with him in a Marriage-covenant, and make him thine, then come what will come, come what can come, all will be well. Thus Christ is every way acceptable, and infinitely acceptable; and as ever, Soul, thou wouldst be indeed espoused to him, dwell much in the study and contemplation of his Acceptableness: labour to be possest with a deep and daily renewed sense of it, which will sweetly draw and allure thy Soul to him.

VI. Wouldst thou indeed be espoused to Christ? then be sure that thou pitchest thy Faith aright upon him, and closest in effectually with him in a way of believing. 'Tis Faith that is both the great uniting, and the great interesting Grace; it unites us to Christ, and interests us in Christ: 'Tis that, as has been formerly declared and evinced, that puts Christ and the Soul into the bosom and embraces of each other Love, and by which the Marriage-knot is tied between them. If ever therefore thou wouldst be indeed espoused unto him, look well to thy Faith, see that thou dost pitch that aright upon him, closing with him, and embracing of him; not by halves, but throughly; not feignedly, but intimately and cordially. But here some may say, How may we do to pitch our Faith aright upon Christ, so as to get Conjugal-Union and Communion with him? Three things must be done in order hereunto, which I desire you to look well to.

I. See that you wholly quit and renounce your selves.

II. Labour to get a right Notion and Apprehension of Christ.

III. Be

III. Be ſure to make a right choice of him being ſo apprehended.

1. Would you pitch your Faith aright upon *Chriſt*, and be indeed eſpouſed to him? Then ſee that you wholly quit and renounce your ſelves: Self and believing are at the utmoſt diſtance from, and enmity with each other that is imaginable; they are irreconcilably oppoſite to each other; and where Faith takes place, there Self vaniſhes and dies away, and that in all its Notions, and with all its accompliſhments. Hence, ſays Chriſt, *If any Man will come after me*, believe on me, be eſpouſed to me, *let him deny himſelf*, Mat. 16.24. *Let him deny himſelf*, renounce himſelf, go out of himſelf, let Self become nothing with him. And indeed, the Soul that believes in Chriſt, does go quite out of himſelf, he ſees and feels himſelf to be a poor empty Nothing in all reſpects; he ſees and finds his Strength to be Weakneſs; his Wiſdom, Folly; his Beauty, Blackneſs; his Righteouſneſs, Sin; his All, nothing: And thus muſt we, if ever we indeed believe and get Union with Chriſt. O my Beloved, one of the great things which ſtands between Faith and us, Chriſt and us, is *Self*: This indeed is the Soul's Darling, the firſt Born (as one calls it) of his Love and Delights, and he is loth to part with it; but part with it he muſt, and renounce it he muſt, or he can never believe it aright, nor is he ever like to have any part or lot in Chriſt: every ſtep out of Self, is a ſtep towards Chriſt, and Faith in Chriſt; and we muſt be divorced from the one, if ever we be married to the other: Particularly, you muſt quit and renounce Self, eſpecially in this three fold Notion; Self-Will, Self-worth, *Self*-Intereſt.

1. You muſt quit and renounce Self-will. He that indeed believes, muſt in a ſort have no Will of his own, but his Will muſt be wholly melted or re-

signed up into the Will of Christ: Hence the Church is said to be *subject unto Christ*, Eph. 5. 24. We are apt to live in our own Wills, and are exceeding fond of, and set upon having our Wills, and that how cross and contrary soever they be to the Will of Christ: But if ever we believe so as to get Union with Christ, our stubborn Wills must bow, our proud Wills must down, and must in all things, as much as is possible, be referred and resigned into Christ's Will: and good reason, for his Will is the Rule of Goodness, as well as first cause of all things: we must not think to say we are Lords, but we must bow to Christ as the great and only Lord.

2. You must quit and renounce *Self-worth, Self-Righteousness*; you must renounce all *Worth and Righteousness* of your own in point of *Justification* and *Acceptation with God*. 'Tis a great word which I shall speak; Mens Duties, living under the Gospel, keep almost as many from Christ and believing, as their Sins do: My meaning is, as the love of Sin keeps some, so confidence in Duties, a confidence in Self-worth, Self-righteousness, keeps multitudes of others from Christ and believing: And the truth is, my Beloved, this piece of Self is the great Idol of the Soul, and that which Men are marvelously loth to quit and renounce; and indeed 'tis oftentimes so painted, and, as it were, spiritualiz'd, acted with so much state, and set out with so many Ornaments, that it would make any one in love with it. But yet this Idol, so dear as 'tis to the Soul, must be denyed and renounced; this Darling must be cast off, and that with loathing and abomination in respect of Soul-saving, if ever you believe, and are united to Christ. And the Soul that indeed does believe, looks upon himself to be the poorest, despicablest, and undonest Creature in the World notwithstanding all; he throws

throws away, not only this Rags, but his Robes too, all his Priviledges, all his Performances, all his moral Eccellencies and Attainments, as to a dependance upon them for Life and Salvation; as you know *Paul* did, *Phil.*3.8,9. of which more hereafter. The Soul's Language in the Work of Believing, is ſuch as this; I am a poor, vile, empty Nothing in my ſelf; I am nothing, I can do nothing, and I deſerve nothing; I am nothing but Sin, I can do nothing but offend and provoke God, and I deſerve nothing but frowns and death from him. If ever I be ſaved, 'tis free Grace muſt ſave me; If ever I find Favour in Gods ſight, it muſt be purely from Grace in Chriſt. Alas! I have walked contrary to *God all may days*; my Heart & Life both have been full of Enmity and Provocation againſt him, and my very Duties are damning, *my beſt righteouſneſs being as filthy Rags*, Iſa.64.6. And indeed, till it comes to this with us, we are like to remain Strangers to Chriſt, and Faith in Chriſt. I ſhall only ſay this futher as to this particular, That no Men in the World are further off from Chriſt, and Union with him through believing, than ſuch as truſt in their own Worth, in their own Righteouſneſs. Chriſt himſelf tells us, That *Publicans and Harlots do enter the Kingdom of Heaven before ſuch*, Mat.21.31.

3. You muſt quit and renounce Self-Intereſt; that is to ſay, you muſt be at a parting point with all, you muſt be willing to forego all your outward Intereſts and Concerns for Chriſt, when he calls you to it, thinking nothing too much or too good for him: This Chriſt is expreſs in, *Mat.*10.37. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me: And, he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* And again, *Luk.*14.33. *Whoſoever he be of you, that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Diſciple.* In a word, the meaning is not, that all that

come to Christ, must actually forsake all those things, and deny themselves as to the enjoyment of them: But the meaning is, (first) that we must have a very diminutive love for these in comparison of Christ. And (secondly) that we must be at a parting point with all for Christ's sake, and at Christ's call. And truly, 'tis but reason we should be so; he that actually parted with so much for us, does highly deserve that we should be in a readiness to part with our little All for him. Thus must wholly quit and renounce our selves, if we would indeed believe and have Union with Christ.

II. Would you pitch your Faith aright upon Christ, and be indeed espoused to him? then labour to get a right Notion and Apprehension of him, as the great Object of Faith. One great Reason why many fall and miscarry in their Faith, and so fall short of Christ, is their ignorance of him; they have not a right Notion and Apprehension of Christ, as the great Object of Faith; and indeed, unless Christ be rightly known and apprehended by us, we are never like to pitch our Faith aright upon him: *How shall they believe* (says the Apostle) *in him, of whom they have not heard?* Rom. 10. 14. *How shall they believe?* i. e. Men cannot believe aright, on one that has not been reveal'd and made known to them: a blind, ignorant Faith is never like to reach Union and Communion with Christ; and, my Beloved, if we would believe aright on Christ, we must know him aright, and apprehend him aright. Faith, in Scripture, is sometimes expresst by Knowledg, *John* 17. 3. Not that Knowledg alone is all that is requisite to Faith; but it notes thus much to us, that the Knowledg of Christ is such a Requisite to believing, that there can be no true believing without it. Hence also Christ speaks of *seeing the Son, and believing on him*; seeing before

before believing, and seeing in order to believing: *This is the Will of him that sent me, That whosever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting Life*, Joh.6. 40. By *seeing the Son*, here we are to understand the true Knowledg of Christ. Hence also they that come to Christ, and believe savingly on him, are said, in order thereunto, *to be taught of God, and to have heard and learn'd of the Father*, Joh.6.45. And pray, what have they been *taught* of God? what have they *learn'd* of Him, but the Knowledg of Christ as the great Object of Faith? at least this is one great Lesson, which all that believe, do and must learn. As ever therefore you would pitch your Faith aright upon Christ, labour to know and apprehend him aright; labour to know and apprehend him, as he is revealed and offered in the Gospel: Particularly.

1. View and apprehend him in his Godhead and Divine Nature. The Gospel reveals him in his Divinity, it propounds him to our Faith, as God, *the true God, the great God, the mighty God, God over all* And thus should Faith eye and apprehend him; thus: *Thomas* his Faith apprehended him, when he said, *My Lord, and my God*, John 20.28. And indeed nothing but a Godhead, an infinite, eternal, unchangeable Godhead, is a Foundation strong enough for Faith to build upon.

2. View and apprehend him in his Personal Relation; not only as God, but also as God the Son, and so as distinguished from the Father. Thus the Gospel reveals and propounds him to our Faith; and thus also should our Faith view and apprehend him. Thus *Peter's* Faith, with the rest in whose Name he spake, did eye and apprehend him; Joh.6.69. *We believe, and are sure* (said he) *that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* There is a distinct Honour due to every

every Perſon in the Sacred Trinity; and the more diſtinctly our Faith eyes and apprehends Chiſt in his Perſonal Relation, as Son, the more compleat it is, and the more it gives him the honour of that Relation.

3. View and apprehend him in his Humanity, or as the Son of God incarnate. The Goſpel reveals and propounds Chriſt as the Object of Faith to us; not ſimply as God, and as God the Son, but as God the Son incarnate, as *the Word made Fleſh*, John 1.14. or, as *God manifeſted in the Fleſh*, 1 Tim.3.16. As having taken Humane Nature into Perſonal Union with himſelf, and ſo is both God and Man in one Perſon; and thus alſo ſhould Faith eye and apprehend him: *You believe in God*, ſays he, *believe alſo in me*, *Joh.*1. 14. Hence alſo he ſpeaks ſo often of *eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood*; and of *giving his fleſh for the Life of the World:* and withal tells us, *that his fleſh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed*, Joh.6.51,53,54,55,56. By all which he ſignifies to us, that our Faith muſt reſpect and apprehend him as Man, as well as God; as the Son Incarnate; and indeed thus he is the next and moſt immediate Object of Faith. The Godhead or Divinity, is the ultimate Object of Faith; but Chriſt, the Son incarnate, is the next and moſt immediate Object of Faith: Hence we are ſaid *by him to believe in God*, 1 Pet 1.21. Faith firſt eyes Chriſt as Man, or the Son incarnate, and by him comes ultimatly to Object it ſelf upon God. The Humanity is *Janua ad Divinitatem*, (as one ſpeaks of it) *a Gate to the Divinity*, that by which our Faith paſſes to the Godhead. *And* (as a great Divine ſpeaks) *he that comes not to Chriſt as Man, ſhall never come to him as God.* The truth is, Faith cannot deal with God immediatly, but as God clothed with our Nature.

4. View

4. View and apprehend him in his Office of Mediatorſhip. The Goſpel reveals and propounds Chriſt to our Faith in his Office, it propounds and reveals him as Chriſt, as the true *Meſſiah* and Saviour of the World; as one ſeal'd, ſent, and anointed by the Father for the redemption of loſt Souls: and thus alſo ſhould Faith eye and apprehend him. So alſo did *Peter*'s Faith apprehend him: *Thou art Chriſt* (ſays he) *the Son of the Living God*, Mat. 16. 16. Hence we read of *believing that Jeſus is the Chriſt*, 1 Joh 5. 1. Hence alſo Chriſt tells the Jews, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins*, Joh. 8. 24. *If ye believe not that I am he*, *i.e.* that I am the *Meſſiah*, the *Chriſt*, the *Saviour* that was promiſed. O! Faith is ſhort of that Notion it ſhould have of Chriſt, unleſs it thus eyes him in his Office.

5. View and apprehend him in his infinite Ability and Sufficiency for the diſchare of his Office. The Goſpel reveals and propounds him to our Faith, as one *able to ſave to the very uttermoſt*; and accordingly ſhould our Faith eye and apprehend him, *Heb.* 7. 25. It reveals him indeed both as an only and all-ſufficient Saviour: As an only Saviour; *Look unto me, and be ſaved, all ye ends of the Earth; for I am God, and there is none beſides me*, Iſa. 45. 22. *Neither is there Salvation in any other; nor is there any other Name given under Heaven, whereby we may be ſaved but his only*, Acts 4. 12. And as an all-ſufficient Saviour; *My Fleſh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed*, (ſays he); *and he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me*, Joh. 6. 55, 57. It reveals him in the infinite virtue of his Blood, the inexhauſtible fulneſs of his Grace, the compleatneſs of his Obedience, the excellency of his Righteouſneſs, the perfection of his Satisfaction, and the like; and thus ſhould our Faith eye and apprehend him. O labour for ſuch a Notion and Apprehenſion of Chriſt

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as this is; as ever you would believe aright, and be indeed espoused to Christ, labour for a sound, clear, distinct knowledg of him, as the great Object of Faith: Pray much for *a Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledg of him*; that was the Apostle's Prayer for the *Ephesians* in this case, *Ephes.* 1. 7. and let it be yours for your selves.

III. Would you pitch your Faith aright upon Christ, and be indeed espoused to him? Then be sure to make a right choice or election of him, being thus known and apprehended. To have a right Notion and Apprehension of Christ, is good and necessary, in order to union with him by believing; but 'tis not enough; know Christ being known and apprehended, must also be chosen and embraced by us, and that as he is revealed and offered in the Gospel. To know and apprehend Christ, is an Act of the Mind or Understanding; but to chuse and embrace Christ, is an Act of the Will and Affections; and tho Faith has its rise and inchoation in the Mind, yet its complement and perfection it has in the will and Affections; these likeing, chusing and embracing of him, and that in a way suitable to what the Mind sees and apprehends concerning him; and this must be added to the former, or there is no right believing, and so no Conjugal Union and Communion with Christ: Hence that of the Apostle, *With the heart Man believeth unto Righteousness*, Rom. 10. 10. True believing then is with the Heart. Now by the Heart here, as also generally elsewhere in Scripture, is meant the Will and Affections; accordingly to believe with the Heart, is for the Will and Affections to chuse and embrace Christ, as he is revealed and offered in the Gospel: this is called *a receiving of Christ*, John 1. 12. We receive Christ into our Wills, when we chuse him,

and

and adhere to him for Life and Salvation; and we receive him into our Affections, when we love him, deſire him, and delight in him; and this is believing: *To believe*, ſays *Calvin*, *is nothing elſe but to chuſe and embrace Chriſt with a ſincere affection of mind, as he is reveal'd and offer'd in the Goſpel*: And this indeed is the great vital Act of Faith, and that whereby our Conjugal Union and Communion with Chriſt is more eſpecially brought about: This is that which makes Chriſt ours, and puts us into the poſſeſſion of him: *Mary*, ſays Chriſt, *has choſen the better part, which ſhall never be taken from her*, Luke 10. 42. She had choſen Chriſt, and her choice of him had made him her own, and ſo her own, as that ſhe could never loſe him, never be deprived of him. Indeed a right choice of Chriſt makes him ours, it unites us to him, and intereſts us in him for ever. A little further to help you in this buſineſs; know that a right choice of Chriſt is accompliſh'd by theſe three ſteps.

1. The Soul apprehending Chriſt (as before) likes him, and approves of him as the beſt and moſt ſuitable Saviour, the moſt lovely and deſirable Object in Heaven or Earth: The Soul ſays of Chriſt, as they did of the Land of *Canaan*, Numb. 14. 7. *The Land* (ſay they) *is an exceeding good Land*: So this Chriſt, ſays the Soul, is an exceeding good Chriſt, this Saviour is an exceeding good Saviour; there's none like him, there's no Beauty like his Beauty, no Blood like his Blood, no Fulneſs like his Fulneſs, no Love like his Love.

2. The Soul deſires him, and longs after him, and that with a ſtrong, ardent, and vigorous affection: This is call'd *hungring and thirſting after Chriſt*, Mat. 5. 6. The Soul ſeeing Chriſt, and approving of him, longingly cries out; O a Chriſt, a Chriſt! O that this good Chriſt were mine!

3. The

3. The Soul is by Grace ſweetly and powerfully determined upon Chriſt; ſo as actually to make a ſolemn and deliberate choice of him; ſingling him out from all other things in Heaven and Earth, as the beſt and moſt deſirable Good, and moſt worthy of his deareſt and moſt intimate embraces. The Soul now pitches his choice upon Chriſt to be his Head and Husband, his Lord and Saviour; his Reſt, his Treaſure, his Happineſs, his All for ever. Now by theſe ſteps, ſee that you come up to make a right choice of Chriſt; be ſure that you like him, and approve of him, as the beſt and moſt deſirable Object in Heaven or Earth: Truly if you view him aright you can't but like him, and approve of him as ſuch. See that the deſire of your Souls be indeed towards him above all others: View him, till you fall in Love with him, yea, till you fall ſick of Love for him; and be ſure not to reſt, till you get your Wills ſweetly and powerfully determined upon him, ſo determined upon him, as to make a free, ſolemn, deliberate choice of him, paſſing by all other Lovers, and taking him alone into the boſom and embraces of your Faith and Love. Now that you may be ſure to make aright choice of Chriſt, ſuch a choice of Chriſt as may keep him yours, and tie the Marriage-Knot between him and you, obſerve herein theſe five or ſix great Rules.

1. Be ſure that you chuſe and embrace Chriſt himſelf, and not ſomewhat elſe inſtead of him. 'Tis a great and awakening ſaying which a worthy Divine has: *Many now*, ſays he, *take Chriſt by gueſs: but be ſure that it be he, and only be whom ye embrace: his ſweet Smell, his lovely Voice, his Face, his gracious working in the Soul, will ſoon tell if it be he or no.* So ſay I, be ſure that it be he; many miſtake the Object, they cloſe with ſomewhat elſe inſtead of Chriſt;

Chriſt; at beſt, they chuſe Chriſts Portion, his Benefits, his Priviledges, his Purchaſes, but not his Perſon: But my advice to you is, pitch on nothing ſhort of the Perſon of Chriſt; then is our Faith beyond all doubt rightly pitcht upon Chriſt, when Chriſt himſelf, not his Benefits and Priviledges only, are choſen and embraced by us. A Marriage, if right, is between Perſon and Perſon, not between Perſon and Portion, Perſon and Eſtate, that being a reſulting thing. So here in this ſpiritual Marriage, Faith does not marry the Soul to the Portion, Benefits, and Priviledges of Chriſt, but to Chriſt himſelf. True, I don't ſay (firſt) but that true Faith gives the Soul an Intereſt in all the Benefits, Priviledges, and Purchaſes of Chriſt. Nor (ſecondly) do I ſay, that the Soul may not have an eye to theſe, and a reſpect to theſe in his choice of, and cloſing with Chriſt; yea, uſually theſe are the firſt things that Faith has in its eye. The firſt thing the Soul looks at, and is taken with, when he is drawn to Chriſt, uſually is that Peace, that Pardon, that Righteouſneſs, that deliverance from Sin, Death, and Hell, which he ſees is found and treaſured up in Chriſt for Souls: But tho theſe things be ſo, yet the Soul does, and muſt go higher, he muſt look at, and pitch upon the Perſon of Chriſt, or his Faith is not ſo right and compleat as it ought to be. Alas! 'tis the Perſon of Chriſt that is the great Fountain of all Grace, and all manifeſtations from God to us: and Faith accordingly does cloſe in with his Perſon. The Spouſes Faith ſeems ſo to do, *Cant.* 5. 10. She had her eye upon the perſonal Beauty & Glory of *Chriſt*, and accordingly embraced him with her Faith and Love. Hence alſo you have ſo often thoſe expreſſions; *I ſought him whom my Soul loved; and ſaw you him whom my Soul loveth?* Her love, and ſo her Faith

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was fixt upon Christ himself: and thus do you fix your Faith and Love upon him; so shall you be sure not to miss of a Conjugal-Union and Communion with him.

2. Be sure that you chuse a whole Christ, and not a part of him only: My meaning is, see that you chuse and embrace Christ in all his Offices, as a King as well as a Priest, as a Lord as well as a Saviour, and as in all his Offices, so for all those ends and uses for which God has designed him, and the Gospel revealed him to us; for Holiness, as well as Righteousness, for Sanctification, as well as Justification. I need not tell you, that Christ is a Lord and King, as well as a Saviour, and that as such he is revealed and offered in the Gospel to our Faith: *Him hath God exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of Sins*, Act. 5. 31. and they that will have him as a Saviour to give 'em Pardon, must have him as a Prince to give them Repentance: And you know Christ's Rest and his Yoak go together in the Gospel-offer, *Mat.* 11. 28, 29. Nor need I tell you, that God has appointed him, and the Gospel reveals him to be our Sanctification as well as our Justification: So you have it expresly 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. Accordingly then do we chuse Christ, and embrace him aright, when we chuse and embrace him under each Notion; when we chuse and embrace him, not as a Saviour only, but as a Lord too; not only as a Priest, to procure Pardon and Reconciliation for us, but also as a Prince, to rule, govern, and command us; not only as our Righteousness to justifie us, but as a Fountain of Grace to make us holy; and thus true Faith does chuse and embrace him, *Isa.* 45. 24. Surely shall one say, *In the Lord I have Righteousness and Strength:* Mark, Faith chuses Christ not only for Righteousness, but

but for Strength too; Righteouſneſs for Juſtification, Strength for Holineſs and Sanctification. Chriſts Language to the Soul, in the tender of himſelf, is ſuch as this: Poor Soul, thou art in a dead, loſt, undone condition; God is wrath with thee, Hell gapes for thee, Juſtice calls aloud for Vengeance againſt thee; and there is no hope, no help, no ſalvation for thee, but in and by me, and union with me: And lo! I am willing to beſtow my ſelf, with all my Fullneſs upon thee: But remember this, that I'le rule and command thee: If I be thy Saviour, I'le be thy Lord and King too: If thou wilt ſhare in my Redemption, thou muſt be content to bear my Yoke, to bow to my Scepter, to ſubmit to my Laws and Kingdom. Accordingly, Faith's anſwer, if right, is this: Content, Lord, 'tis but fit, that he that ſaves, ſhould rule, and reign; that he that redeems, ſhould be bowed and ſubmitted to, and I do willingly give up my ſelf to thy holy and ſpiritual Government; thy Yoak is eaſie, thy Scepter is Righteous, thy Kingdom is full of Peace and Joy, and I deſire to come under them: I would have thee to make me Holy as well as Righteous; to ſubdue this rebellious heart of mine, and to rule in me by thy pure Spirit, as well as to ſave me by thy perfect Obedience. O ſee, that thus you chuſe and embrace whole Chriſt, elſe your Faith is not right, nor are you like to attain unto a Conjugal-Union and Communion with him.

3. Be ſure that you chuſe Chriſt ſingly and alone, and not join ſomewhat elſe with him. Some are for compounding with Chriſt, they would join ſomewhat elſe in Partnerſhip with him: but as Chriſt muſt not be divided, ſo neither will he be compounded, he will be all, or nothing at all to Souls; and ſo true Faith cloſes with him: Hence *with the new Creature, Chriſt*

Is ſaid to be *All, and in all*, Col. 3. 11. The *Patriarchs* (as one obſerves) had many of them a Wife and a Concubine, but it is not ſo here: No, as Faith chuſes a whole Chriſt, ſo it chuſes a naked Chriſt, Chriſt ſingly and alone, without joyning any thing elſe in partnerſhip with him: It matches the Soul to Chriſt with an abſolute excluſion of all other Matches. Indeed, Faith ſees enough in a ſingle Chriſt, a naked Chriſt, without the help of any thing elſe, and accordingly chuſes and embraces him: And ſo muſt your Faith chuſe and embrace him, or you are like to miſs of Conjugal-Union and Communion with him. You muſt chuſe him ſingly & alone; joyning nothing with him, and that eſpecially in the great buſineſs of Righteouſneſs and Acceptation with God. Some would fain compound with *Chriſt* in this Buſineſs; they would have *Chriſt*, but they would have their own Duties too; they would have his Righteouſneſs, but they would have their own Righteouſneſs too; they would have theirs bear a ſhare with his in the point of Righteouſneſs and Juſtification before God. Thus 'twas with the Jews of old, *Rom.* 9. 31, 32. & 10. *beg.* 'tis ſaid, *They followed after the Law of Righteouſneſs, but attained not to the Law of Righteouſneſs*: And why? *Becauſe*, ſays the Apoſtle, *they ſought it not by Faith, but, as it were, by the Works of the Law.* And *ch.* 10. 3. *They went about*, 'tis ſaid, *to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs, and ſubmitted not themſelves to the Righteouſneſs of God.* Pray obſerve, firſt, They were addicted to, and look'd for Salvation by their own Righteouſneſs. Secondly, Though they were addicted to their own righteouſneſs, and would fain live by it, yet they ſeemed not to cleave wholly to that, but would have *Chriſt*'s and theirs joyned together: therefore 'tis ſaid, *They ſought it not by Faith, but, as it were, by the Works of the Law*, i. e. They were neither wholly

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for *Christ*, nor wholly for self, but partly for the one, and partly for the other, joyning Self with Christ. And, thirdly, this left them short of Righteousness, Life, Salvation, and all: For 'tis said, that upon this account *they attained not unto the Law of Righteousness.* To joyn Self with *Christ* in this point, is as dangerous and destructive, as to set up Self against *Christ.* Thus (I say) 'twas with the Jews of old, and thus 'tis with the Papists now. But, my Beloved, if ever you would pitch your Faith aright upon Christ, you must not once think of thus compounding the Business between Him and Self; but *Christ* must be all in all: We must shut our eyes against all other things in point of Justification, and must go forth singly and nakedly to *Christ*, venturing our eternal All upon the alone Bottom of his everlasting Righteousness. 'Tis *Calvin*'s observation upon the place last quoted, That *the foundation of, or first step towards our obtaining an interest in the righteousness of God, is for a man to renounce and go out of his own Righteousness.* Thus I am sure, *Paul*'s Faith chose and embraced Christ, *Phil.* 3. 7, 8, 9. *Those things which were gain to me*, says he, *those I counted loss for Christ; yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledg of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by faith.* Pray mark, his Faith here chuses and embraces *Christ* for his Righteousness and Justification, and herein he joyns nothing with him; he pitches singly and nakedly upon *Christ* alone, renouncing all other things whatever. He had as much of his own to have lent and depended upon in this point, as any meer man that ever lived since sin entred into the World; for, in Privi-

Privileges, in Graces, in Services, and in Sufferings for Christ, (I am apt to think) he excelled all meer Men; but yet he rests on none of these, no nor so much as joins any thing of it with Christ, but rejects and renounces all, and that with the greatest loathing and detestation in the point of Justification, cleaving singly and nakedly to *Christ* alone: says he, *I account all but loss, yea, dung*, that is, as the most vile and loathsom thing; and I would not be found in it for a thousand Worlds. The truth is, to join any thing of our own with Christ in this business, is what excludes us from any share in Christ, or any Benefit by *Christ*. So much the Apostle is express in, *Gal.* 5. 2, 3, 4, *Behold, I* Paul *say unto you, That if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a Debtor to do the whole Law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace* The sum of the Apostles design is to shew, that to join any thing of our own with Christ, in the business of Righteousness and Justification, and not rest purely and entirely upon him, is what shuts us out from any part and lot in *Christ*, or any benefit and advantage by him: for, pray observe, there were among the *Galatians*, some who did *miscere Legem cum Christo*, as *Calvin*'s expression is, *they did join the Law with Christ*; pressing and taking up Circumcision, as a part of that Righteousness whereby they expected to be justified and saved. They were not so gross in their minds (as that great Divine there observes) as to expect Salvation meerly by the observation of the Law, and their own obedience; but they were for sharing the Business between this and *Christ*. Now what says *Paul* to them? and by what does he labour to antidote the Believers among them against this great Error? Why, (first) he tells them plainly, that if they will join either Circum-

Circumciſion, or any thing elſe of their own, with Chriſt in this Matter, then *Chriſt ſhall profit them nothing*, ver. 2. And he aſſerts the ſame thing, *ver.* 4. *Chriſt*, ſays he, *is become of no effect to you, i.e.* you ſhall have no part in Chriſt, no benefit by *Chriſt*; *Chriſt* is of no uſe, no benefit, no advantage to you, no more than if he had never been. And indeed, as one obſerves upon the place, *Whoever is but for an half Chriſt in this buſineſs, loſes all of Chriſt.* (Secondly.) He tells them, that if they will have any thing of their own to bear ſhare with Chriſt in the matter of their Salvation, *they are Debtors to do the whole Law.* If they will have their obedience to the Law, to have any ſhare in their acceptation with God, then they muſt keep the whole Law, for elſe all were nothing. 'Tis a great Speech of a learned Interpreter upon theſe words; *Whoever*, ſays he, *is a Debtor to do the whole law can never eſcape death, becauſe he will always remain under guilt; for no one will ever be found, who will be able to fulfil or ſatisfy the Law, ſuch an obligation therefore is the certain damnation of the man that lies under it.* Thus you ſee, there muſt be nothing elſe of our own joined with Chriſt in the matter of our Righteouſneſs and Juſtification with God; but our Faith muſt cleave ſingly and nakedly to Chriſt alone: The truth is, Chriſts Righteouſneſs alone is ſufficient to ſave and juſtify the worſt of Sinners: 'Tis *the Righteouſneſs of God*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. and *the Righteouſneſs of the Law*, Rom. 8. 3. A Righteouſneſs every way adequate and commenſurate to the ſtricteſt Demands of Law and Juſtice; a Righteouſneſs as long as broad, as deep as high, as the Sin and Guilt of the moſt ſcarlet, crimſon Sinners can be; and why ſhould any think of joining any thing therewith? Truly ſo to do, is to reflect great diſhonour upon it, and upon the Wiſdom and Grace of God, in ordering it for our

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Juſtification and Salvation. And as we muſt joyn nothing with *Chriſt* in the Mattar of Righteouſneſs and Juſtification, ſo neither muſt we joyn any thing with him in the matter of our Sanctification and Holineſs. We ſhould look for no Grace, no Holineſs but what comes from him, and is wrought in us by him: Nor indeed will God own any thing for Grace and Holineſs in us at laſt, that does not come from him. In all reſpects therefore let the Language of your Souls be, O none but Chriſt, none but Chriſt.

4. Be ſure that you chuſe *Chriſt*, and embrace him as your Reſt and Happineſs; and not only as one that is to bring you unto Reſt and Happineſs. *Chriſt*, my Beloved, is not only the way and means to bring Men unto Happineſs, but he alſo is himſelf their Happineſs; and as ſuch he is tendered to us, and ſhould be choſen and embraced by us: *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, (ſays he) *John* 14. 16. that is, as one gloſſes upon it, I am the Beginning, the Progreſs, and Perfection of a Chriſtians Happineſs. Sure I am, as Chriſt, conſidered as the Way, is the Means, and what leads us into Happineſs: So *Chriſt*, conſidered as the Life, is himſelf our Happineſs, our ſupream Happineſs: and indeed, we come to *Chriſt* as the Life, by *Chriſt* as the Way. Sweet is that Saying which I have read in one of the Ancients on this place; *We, thy People*, (ſays he, ſpeaking to Chriſt) *do come by thee, to thee, becauſe thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life: the Way in thy Example, the Truth in thy Promiſe, the Life in the Reward. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, i.e. as another expounds it, *I am the only right Way, the ſupream Truth, the true Life, the bleſſed Life, the increated Life.* And ſuitable hereunto is *Calvin*'s Obſervation upon theſe words, *The ſum* (ſays he) *of this Sentence is this, He, whoever he be, that obtains and poſſeſſes Chriſt, can want nothing.*

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Whoever therefore is not content with him alone, aſpires after ſomething beyond the ultimate & higheſt Perfection. And then he concludes thus; *If any one turns aſide from Chriſt, he can do nothing but err; if any one does not reſt in him, he elſewhere feeds upon nothing but wind and vanity: If any one makes out after any thing beyond him, he will find Death inſtead of Life.* O there are infinite Beauties, Delights, and Perfections in Chriſt, whereby he is able to fill and ſatisfie us, and make us happy. And for my own part, as I deſire never to be happy, if Chriſt be not able to bring me to happineſs, ſo I deſire no better or greater happineſs, than what Chriſt is or can be to me. O there is all in him, all to fill, all to comfort, all to delight and raviſh, all to ſolace and ſatisfy the largeſt Faculties of Eternal Souls. *May I have but Chriſt,* (ſays *Rutherford*) *I ſhall think my ſelf as well Heaven'd as any whatever.* Truly he, and he alone, is *Centrum quietativum*, as the Schools ſpeak, the quieting, reſting, Center of the Soul. And ſo the Pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal.* 116.7. Indeed, he in his Preſence, and our enjoyment of him, is Heaven and Happineſs. 'Tis the higheſt happineſs which *Chriſt* promiſes his People here, *Joh.* 14. 21. and 'tis the higheſt Happineſs which his People reckon upon, or hope for hereafter, *Phil.* 1.23. Anſwerable whereunto is the Obſervation of one, upon thoſe words of Chriſt to the Thief upon the Croſs, *Luke* 23. 43. *This day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe. With me!* (ſays he) *O wonderful goodneſs! He does not ſay ſimply, thou ſhalt be in Paradiſe, or thou ſhalt be with Angels, but thou ſhalt be with me, thou ſhalt be ſatisfied with him whom thou deſireſt.* Thus Chriſt is the Reſt and ſupream Happineſs of Souls; and accordingly our Faith ſhould chuſe and embrace him. I will not ſay, there is not true Faith, where the Soul does not come up to

such a choice of *Christ* as this is; but this I'le say, That tho Faith at first may not thus chuse *Christ*, yet afterwards, as it grows up more towards Perfection, it does come to chuse *Christ* under this Notion: And the more distinct it is in chusing *Christ*, as the supream Rest and Happiness of the Soul, the more compleat and perfect it is. Faith's Language to *Christ*, when come to any maturity, is such as this: Lord, as all my Life is in thy Death, all my Healing in thy Wounds, all my Righteousness in thy Obedience; so all my Happiness is in thy Presence, all my Heaven in the Bosom and embraces of thy Love: Nor *have I any in Heaven but thee; neither is there any upon Earth that I desire besides thee*, Psal. 73. 25. O thus chuse *Christ!* chuse him as the Rest, the Solace, the Happiness of your Souls, and never think of any thing else to be the least part of your Happiness besides Christ.

5. Be sure that you chuse and embrace Christ with his Cross, and not only Christ with his Crown; Christ crucified, as well as Christ glorified; Christ upon terms of suffering for him, as well as reigning with him, he calling thereunto. Thus also Christ tenders himself to us, and thus must he be chosen and embraced by us, *Mat.* 16. 24. *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow me*: And *Luke* 14. 27. *Whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after me, cannot be my Disciple.* Some are for Christ and his Crown, but they stick at his Cross: They are for a reigning Christ, but not for a persecuted Christ: But, my Beloved, if you would so chuse him as to be married to him, you must chuse him as upon the Cross crucified, as well as upon the Throne glorified: the meaning is, you must chuse him with a firm resolution to suffer for him, if he calls you thereunto; you must chuse him as

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one persecuted and distressed on Earth, as well as one dignifi'd and glorifi'd in Heaven: In a word, you must chuse him for better, for worse, in all estates and conditions, with all his Inconveniences, as well as his Priviledges, with his Poverty, his Imprisonments, his Reproaches, his Deaths, his Dangers, his Conflict, and the like: that is to say, you must chuse him with a willing resolution of mind, to undergo all this at his call, and for his sake; and this indeed is to close with him in his own way, and upon his own terms. *Christ*'s language to the Soul, in the tender of himself to him, is such as this; Soul, I am willing to be espoused to thee, I am willing to bestow my Self, with all my Riches and Fulness upon thee; but if thou wilt have me and these, thou must be content to suffer for me, to be reproached, to be persecuted, to be imprisoned, yea, to be *killed all the day long* for me, when I please to call thee thereunto. And indeed Faith, when right, closes with him upon these terms: Content, says the Soul, being acted by a true Spirit of Faith; *Christ* upon any terms that he thinks fit, *Christ* with the Cross, *Christ* with Reproach, with Imprisonment, with Death, with whatever he pleases rather than go without him. And indeed we need not be scared, and terrified at the Cross; for there is no Cross so bitter, as Christ is sweet; there is nothing we can suffer for Christ, that is worthy to be compared with the Glory we shall have in Christ, and with Christ: Besides, Christ is worthy to be suffered for; and therefore welcom Christ, and welcom his Cross too. Truly, my Beloved, Christs Cross is sweet, very sweet, as he makes it: That sweet smell'd and perfum'd Cross of Christ, says one, is accompanied with sweet refreshments, with the Kisses of a King, with the Joy of the Holy Ghost; there-

fore ſcare not at it, but chuſe him with his Croſs as well as his Crown.

6. Be ſure that you chuſe Chriſt often, and think it not one ſingle Act or Work only to chuſe and embrace him. If you would indeed make ſure of *Chriſt*, and an Eſpouſal to him, you ſhould chuſe him and embrace him anew every day. We are apt to look upon the Work of chuſing and embracing *Chriſt*, as one ſingle Act or Work only; but, my Beloved, 'tis a Work that ſhould be often repeated: by often repeating of it, we ſhould grow more ſound, more ſtrong, more diſtinct in it: As a ſecond Edition corrects the Errors of the firſt, ſo after-acts of believing in this kind, do ſupply the defects of the firſt Act: Indeed, my advice to you is, that you would make as much Conſcience of chuſing and embracing Chriſt afreſh every day, as of praying every day; eſpecially if you be either young Beginners in believing, or older Believers under clouds and darkneſs. St. *Paul* made freſh choices of Chriſt to the very laſt, *Phil.* 3.8,9. And 'tis the Duty of them that do believe, to believe: *Theſe things write I unto you*, ſays St. *John*, *that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God*, 1 John 5. 13. They did believe, and he would have them to believe afreſh every day; and ſo would I have you do, every day renew the firſt great Act of Faith in your cloſing with Chriſt, ſo ſhall every day be a day of Eſpouſals between Chriſt and you; and ſo by degrees ſhall you come to the ſenſe and comfort of this Eſpouſal. I have read of ſome who never come to a ſight and ſenſe of their Union with Chriſt, till they took this courſe. Thus I have now ſhewn you the way how you may come to be eſpouſed to Chriſt, as well as what an Husband he is, what great

great things he does for his Spouſes, and how much his heart is ſet upon an Eſpouſal with Sinners: Now, will you take this courſe? Or ſhall all be loſt with you? Poſſibly the whole will have a different effect upon thoſe that read or hear theſe things: Some, I hope, will be won and gained to Chriſt by them; others, I fear, will reject and deſpiſe all, and that either out of a Spirit of profaneneſs, or inſenſibility of their need of, or concernedneſs in theſe things. If any Soul ſhall reject them out of a Spirit of profaneneſs, I would ſay to ſuch a Soul, as *Solomon* to the Scorner, *Prov.* 9. 12. *If thou ſcorneſt, thou alone ſhalt bear it*; thou alone ſhalt bear all thy Sins, and all the Wrath and Vengeance of God due to them: If any ſhall reject theſe things out of a Spirit of inſenſibility of their need of, and concern in them; their caſe is the more to be pitied; for the more inſenſible they are of their miſery without Chriſt, the greater is that miſery of theirs. *What more miſerable*, ſays *Auſtin*, *than for a miſerable man not to commiſerate himſelf?* Others, it may be, ſtand doubting and trembling, daring neither to reject, nor yet to embrace: not to reject, becauſe their need of Chriſt is ſo great, the worth of Chriſt ſo eminent, and the guilt of the rejection of Chriſt ſo black; nor yet embrace, becauſe their Sins are ſo many, and their Unworthineſs ſo great. To ſuch I would ſay, Ceaſe thy trembling, and delay thy cloſing with Chriſt no longer; it has been thy ſin, let it be thy ſhame and ſorrow that thou haſt neglected and refuſed *Chriſt* ſo long; ſaying with *Auſtin*, *I have loved thee too late, O thou ſo ancient and yet ſo new a Beauty*; *I have loved thee too late.* And for thy encouragement, I would ſay to thee, as the Servant did to his Lord upon ſuch an occaſion as this, *Luke* 14.22. *Lord, it is done as thou haſt commanded, and yet there is room.* Tho

many Sinners, and great Sinners have been received to Mercy, yet ſtill there is room for thee, and for all that have a mind to Chriſt: There is room in Chriſts Heart, there is room in Chriſts Arms, there is room in his Covenant, there is room in his Kingdom, there is room upon his Throne with his Father for thee: But if yet any ſhall reject this offer of Love, and perſiſt ſo to do, ſuch will at laſt find there is room in Hell, room in the Infernal Pit, room in the place of Torment for them: Therefore as Life and Death are once more ſet before you, ſo I beſeech you to chuſe Life, and not Death, that you may live for ever.

CHAP. XI.

Being a Contemplation of the infinite Love and Condeſcenſion of Chriſt to Souls; and the unſpeakable Comfort and Happineſs of Believers in this ſweet Eſpouſal.

IN the view of all that has been hitherto declared, we may well take up an admiring contemplation of Chriſts Love and Condeſcenſion, and Believers Comfort and Happineſs; the one and the other being exceeding great and glorious. O! for Chriſt to marry poor Souls to himſelf, and for poor Souls to be married to Chriſt, how great is the Love of the one, and the Happineſs of the other herein!

1 How great is the Love and Condeſcenſion of *Chriſt* in marrying Souls to himſelf! Next to his becoming Man, and dying for them; Wherein can he teſtify greater Love and Condeſcenſion to them than

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in this? There are, among many others that might be mentioned, that will argue his Love and Condeſcenſion herein to be wonderful and glorious, two things. One is the infinite diſparity and diſproportion between the Parties, Him and Them; the other is the unſpeakable nearneſs and gloriouſneſs of that Union and Relation which he takes them into with himſelf: Both which I deſire you to contemplate.

1. Contemplate the infinite diſparity and diſproportion between him and them. What proportion is there between a King and a Beggar? What proportion is there between an Ant and an Angel? yea between the ſmalleſt Worm, and all the Angels in Heaven? Infinitely leſs proportion is there between Chriſt and Sinners; and yet he eſpouſes them to himſelf. What ſhall I ſay? He is both high and great, we are baſe and vile; He is bleſſed and glorious, we are wretched and deſpicable: He is a great King, we are poor Slaves and Vaſſals, yea, the worſt of Slaves and Vaſſals, being the Slaves and Vaſſals of Sin and Satan. And to ſum up all in a few words; He is God, and we are Creatures; yea, he is an infinitely pure and holy God, and we are unſpeakably impure and unholy Creatures: O how great is the diſproportion! and yet he marries us to himſelf. What proportion is there between God and the Creature? The Creature at beſt is but a ſmall drop of Being, but *God* is *Mare Eſſendi*, a Sea, a Fountain, an Ocean of Being: The Creature is, and has but a little Good; but, *Deus eſt Bonum infinitiſſime infinitum*, as *Bradwardin* ſpeaks of him, *God is a moſt infinitely infinite Good.* The Creature is a depending thing; the Being of the Creature is a depending Being; the very Nature of the Creature lies much in dependance: but God is an abſolute and independent Being, he being of himſelf and from himſelf: Indeed,

all other *things are of him, and from him, and to him,* as the Scripture ſpeaks. Now, for God to marry the Creature, and eſpouſe the Creature to himſelf; O what love, what condeſcenſion is this! and yet greater love than this does Chriſt ſhew: For what proportion is there between an infinitely Holy God, and univerſally ſinful, defiled, and polluted Creatures? The diſtance between God and us, as we are Creatures, is great; but the diſtance between the infinitely Holy God and us, as Sinners, is in ſome ſort unſpeakably greater. 'Tis our Duty, and ſhould be our Joy to know and keep our Creature-diſtance with God; we ſhould rejoyce to think that God is ſo infinitely above us; but 'tis our miſery, and we ſhould tremble to think of our ſinful diſtance from God, that diſtance I mean tha Sin is, and has cauſed between God and us. Now for a Holy God to eſpouſe ſinful Creatures to himſelf; yea for a God ſo infinitely holy, to eſpouſe Souls who are ſo utterly ſinful to himſelf, as the beſt of us all by Nature are; this is greater love and condeſcenſion ſtill. *O wonderful commerce!* (ſays one of the Ancients, ſpeaking of Chriſts dying for his People) *the King dies for the Servant, God for Man, the Creator for the Creature, the Innocent for the Nocent.* The like I may ſay here; O wonderful condeſcenſion! The King marries a Slave, God the Creature, the pure and holy One polluted and defiled Sinners. True indeed, he makes them Saints by and upon his marrying of them; but he finds them Sinners when he firſt makes it a time of love to them: O adore this Love, this Condeſcenſion!

2. Contemplate the unſpeakable nearneſs and glorioufneſs of that Union and Relation which he takes them into with himſelf: as the diſtance and diſproportion between the Parties is infinitely great ſo,

ſo the Union and Relation he takes them into, is very near and glorious. The Union between the Vine and the Branches is near; the Union and Relation between the Head and the Members is near; the Union and Relation between the Husband and Wife is near; but all theſe are but ſhadows and repreſentations of that Union and Relation which *Chriſt* takes Believers into with himſelf, which muſt therefore be nearer and greater than all. 'Tis indeed (as upon occaſion has been before declared) next for Intimacy and Glory, to the eſſential and perſonal Union, yea, it comes ſo near the higheſt Union of all, the Union that is between the Father & the Son, as that it is ſet forth in Scripture by the ſame expreſſions that that Union is, *viz. by being* and *dwelling in each other.* Yea, *Chriſt* himſelf ſeems to bring it ſo near that great Union, as that he makes that the Pattern of it, and accordingly prays for it for his People, *Jo.* 17. 21. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us.* Pray mark, he prays for the accompliſhment of his Union for them, as the top and perfection of all their Happineſs; and not only ſo, but as that which comes as near the great Union between his Father and himſelf, as can well be conceived. 'Tis a ſweet Saying which one of the Ancients has upon theſe words of Chriſt; *What more glorious,* ſays he, *than this Union? What further or higher, poor Soul, canſt thou either have, or deſire to have, than this, thou ſhalt be one with thy Bridegroom? O happy, exceeding happy, yea, of all others moſt happy Union!* In a word, nearer than this Creatures can't well be taken into Chriſt, nor can they have a greater Glory put upon them, than there is put upon them in their being taken unto this Union and Relation to him. How great therefore muſt the

love and condescension of *Christ* herein to Believers be! O for him to take such so near himself, as to make them one with him, to lay them in his Bosom, to communicate himself to them! This is Love indeed, and this we should contemplate and admire.

2. How great is the Comfort and Happiness of Believers, in being thus married and espoused to *Christ!* We say of such or such a Woman that is well married, that she is well disposed of, and is very happy in an Husband. But, O Soul, how well art thou disposed of, who art disposed of to Christ? And how happy art thou in a Husband, who art married to him? What, Soul, married to Jesus, to sweet Jesus, to lovely Jesus, to Jesus the Son of God! O what sweet, what strong consolation may this be to thee! and how should it fill thy heart with holy Triumph and exultation for ever? This alone may comfort thee in all difficulties and troubles of Life, & in all the conflicts and agonies of Death. Cast thine eye back on the nature of this Espousal, and what an Husband Christ is, and what great things he does for his Spouses, as the one and the other of them has been declared; and then judg of thine own Happiness, in being taken into this Relation to him. In *Cant.* 6 9. 'tis said concerning the Spouse of Christ, *That the Daughters saw her, and Blessed her; yea, the Queens and the Concubines, and they praised her:* They look'd upon her to be the most happy on Earth. And truly, Soul, when I look upon thee as the Spouse of Christ, I can't but in like manner bless and praise thee; and thou thy self may'st well bless thy self, and say, Blessed be the day that ever I was born, blessed be the Womb that bare me, and blessed be the Paps that gave me suck! But yet to raise this Comfort and Happiness of thine a little higher, that thou mayest rejoyce in thy Lot, the Lines being fallen to thee

in

in pleasant places; Consider three things:

I. Consider, That this Relation of thine to Christ, gives thee a full Interest in him, and all that is his. This the Spouse much gloried and rejoiced in, as her Crown and Happiness, therefore she is frequently up with it in a way of holy boasting; *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*, Cant. 2. 16. And again, *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine*, Chap. 6. 3. Being espoused to Christ, Christ is thine, and Christ being thine, his Blood is thine, his Righteousness is thine, his Love is thine, his Fulness is thine; the Fruit of all his Sufferings, the Virtue of all his Offices, the Sweetness of all his Relations is thine. *Christ* being thine, all is thine, all the Promises are thine, all the Ordinances are thine; Life is thine, Death is thine, Time is thine, Eternity is thine, Things present are thine, Things to come are thine, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. O what a goodly Heritage hast thou, and how should thy Soul bless the Lord, that ever he drew thee into this Union and Relation to him? What a Spring of Comfort may this be to thee in all conditions? *Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed:* Why? *For thy Maker is thy Husband*, Isa. 54. 4, 5. The truth is, tho' possibly thou mayest have little of this World, yet in having Christ, thou hast all thou needest, and are capable of to make thee happy for ever.

II. Consider, That this Union and Relation of thine to Christ, remains firm and stedfast for ever: And O what sweetness does this add unto it! True, may the Soul say, this Relation is a blessed Relation, and full of sweetness and comfort: But will it hold? Yea, it will hold, and that for ever. The best Comforts thou enjoyest here below, will shortly have a period, and the sweetest Relations thou standest in here, will after a while be dissolved and broken; but thy Union and Relation to Christ will last for ever; but

that can never be dissolved: *I will betroth thee unto me*, says God; *yea, I will betroth thee unto me*: But, Lord, for how long? (may the Soul say;) Why, *for ever*, says God, *Hos.* 2. 19. O that word, *for ever!* this puts an infinite sweetness into this Relation of thine. This one word, *for ever*, (as one observes upon this place) makes a misery, (tho but small in it self) an infinite Misery; and a Mercy, (tho but small in it self) even an infinite Mercy. How much more does it make that which in it self is so great, as thy Union and Espousal to Christ is, sweet and desirable?

O but, says the Soul, never was there such a Wretch as I am; never did any carry it towards Christ as I do: True, he has made love to me, and I have some hopes that I have closed up with him in a Marriage-covenant; but alas, never was there such a rebellious, revolting, backsliding Heart as mine is: I am ever playing the Harlot, and going a whoring from him; by means of which, I fear, he will break Union and Communion with me, and at last cast me off. I answer, Truly, Soul, this is very sad, and thou shouldst lie low in the dust in the sense of it: Yet, to encourage thee against thy fears, consider three things.

1. Consider, That Christ is not forward to take advantage against Souls for their failings and breaking with him: He is not *strict to mark what is done amiss*, Psal. 30. 3. He is not prone to cast off, and *to put away*, no 'tis what he *hates*, Mal. 2. 16. True, he may, and many times does withdraw from us, and frown upon us, but putting away he loves not; yea, he pities and spares us under our Infirmities, and his Bowels are moved for us.

2. Consider, That before ever Christ made Love to thee, and took thee into this Relation with himself, he knew perfectly what manner of one thou wouldst

wouldſt be, and how thou wouldſt carry it towards him; and yet all could not hinder him from ſhewing this favour to thee: Why then ſhouldſt thou think it would cauſe him to break with thee now? The Soul may be apt to ſay, Did Chriſt think I would be ſuch a Wretch, that I would ſo grieve him, ſo offend him; that I would carry it ſo unworthily towards him, under all his Love as I do? Yea, Soul, Chriſt thought it, he knew it perfectly before-hand. In *Deut.* 31, 21. 'tis ſaid, *That God knew what Iſrael would do before hand*: So Chriſt knew before-hand how thou wouldſt ſlight his Love, grieve his Spirit, violate his Laws; he knew how thou wouldſt offend & affront him, by a proud, vain, wanton behaviour before him; he knew how thou wouldſt backſlide, and go a whoring from him; and had he not ſeen and known that he had Love enough, and Bowels enough to cover and paſs by all, he would never have made love to thee. Hence, when he *betroths*, he is ſaid to do it in *Judgment*, Hoſ. 2. 19. Chriſt knew what he did, and what an one he married, when he married thee to himſelf. And as all could not hinder his Love at firſt, ſo neither ſhall it take off his Love from thee now.

3. Conſider, That thou mayeſt have many failings and miſcarriages, be guilty of many breakings with Chriſt, and departures from him; and yet the Marriage-covenant between him and thee not be broken. A Woman may be guilty of many Failings and Miſcarriages, many Defects & Miſdemeanors, and yet all not break the Marriage-covenant between her Husband and her. And ſo here, O how ſweet is that Scripture! *Pſal.* 89. 30. 31, 32, 33, 34. *If his Children forſake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments: If they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments: Then will I viſit their Tranſgreſſions with a Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes.* And what follows? *Nevertheleſs,*

ſays

ſays he, *my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail. My Covenant will I not break; nor alter the thing that is gone out of my Lips.* Pray mark. Chriſts People may ſin, and ſin greatly, and he may ſharply chaſtiſe them for their ſins; yea, he may ſeem to take away his loving kindneſs from them, and may really for a time ſuſpend the influences and manifeſtations thereof; but his Covenant-love and faithfulneſs to them, that remains firm and ſtedfaſt to them for ever, notwithſtanding all. So again, *Jer.* 3. 1. 14. *Tho thou haſt played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return again to me, ſaith the Lord. Turn, O back ſliding Children, for I am married unto you.* Mark, tho they had back-ſliden, tho they had plaid the Harlot with many Lovers, yet Chriſt owns his Covenant-relation to them and with them; yea, and he ſends, as it were, his Covenant after them, and by that fetches them home to himſelf. O whatever thy Miſcarriages are, whatever thy breakings with Chriſt, and departures from him have been, yet, being once married to him, the Marriage-Union and Relation between him and thee remains firm and ſtedfaſt for ever notwithſtanding all.

O but, ſays the Soul, my Heart is ſtill bent to back-ſliding from Chriſt, and I am afraid I ſhall at laſt totally and finally depart from him, and then farewel all. I anſwer, That *Chriſt* ſtands engaged to keep thee firm, true, notwithſtanding any thing in and of thy ſelf: if left by Chriſt, thou wouldſt be apt totally and finally to depart from him; but Chriſt himſelf ſtands engaged to keep thee to him. 'Tis the very tenure of his Covenant with thee, *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will make an everlaſting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, and I will put my fear into their Hearts, that they ſhall never depart from me.* O Sirs, not only is *Chriſt's* Heart towards his People, but he

he is engaged, by Covenant, to keep their hearts cloſe to him, and faithful with him; at laſt ſo far as that they ſhall not totally depart from him; and ſo their faithfulneſs to him, does depend upon his faithfulneſs to them. I'le cloſe this conſideration with that known and great Scripture, *Rom* 8. latter end, *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall Tribulation, or Diſtreſs, or Perſecution, or Famine, or Nakedneſs, or Peril, or Sword? Nay, in all theſe things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am perſwaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth,* (and leſt all theſe things ſhould not reach the caſe of every Soul, he adds) *nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

III. Conſider, That 'tis not long e're the Lord Jeſus, thy dear Husband, will come and conſummate the Marriage between him and thy Soul. And O how ſweet will this be! the Match here is but as it were begun between *Chriſt* and thee; but Chriſt will ſhortly come and conſummate it; *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh*, Mat. 25. 6. And again, *They that were ready, went into the Marriage*, ver. 10. And the *Marriage of the Lamb is come*, Rev. 19. 7. There is a time, when Chriſt will come to conſummate the Marriage between him and Souls. When he comes as to the World, he comes as a Judg to condemn him, to avenge the Quarrel of his Goſpel, the Quarrel of his Covenant, the Quarrel of his Blood, all which they have rejected; he comes to paſs Sentence upon them for reſiſting his Spirit, for contemning his Grace, for breaking his Laws, for neglecting his Salvation: And O how dark will the Day of his coming be to them! But now to his own Spouſes, when he comes, he

he comes as a Bridegroom: And O how sweet will this coming of his be to them!

1. Then he will turn all your Water into Wine. *John* 2. *beg.* we read, *That Christ being at a Marriage, he there turned Water into Wine.* And truly, Soul, when we shall come to consummate the Marriage between him and thee, he will turn all thy Waters of Affliction into the Wine of sweet Consolation to thee: He will turn thy Night into Day, thy Darkness into Light, thy Sorrows into Joys, thy Mourning into Dancing, thy Troubles into Rest, thy Conflicts into Triumphs, thy Labours into Reward, thy mournful Lamentations into joyful Halelujahs. Then will he fulfil that Scripture to thee, *Rev.* 21. 4. *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more Death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.* Poor Soul, now thine eyes are full of Tears; with Holy *David*, *Thou goest weeping and mourning* (it may be) *all the day long*; *but then all tears shall be wiped off from thine eyes.* Now thou art *in Deaths often*, as the Apostle was; but then there shall be no more Death. Now thou art full of Sorrow, *thy Days are spent in grief, and thy years in sighing*; but then there shall be *no more sorrow*; sorrow and sighing both shall fly away for ever. Now thou art full of pains; yea, as the Holy Prophet of old complained, *Thou art pained at thy very Heart*; in the sense of thy own Afflictions, and in the sense of the Church's Afflictions, in the sense of thine own Sins, and in the sense of the Worlds Sins, thou art pain'd at the very Heart; but then there shall be *no more pain.* Now *thou sowest in tears*, but then *thou shalt reap in joy*: Now *thou goest forth weeping*, yet *bearing precious Seed*; then *thou shalt return rejoicing, bringing thy Sheaves with thee*: Now thou art in a storm, a storm

of

of Affliction, a ſtorm of Temptation, a ſtorm of Perſecution; *thou art afflicted, toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted*, it may be, as the Church ſometimes was, *Iſa.* 54. 11. But then he will *make thy ſtorm a calm*, and ſo *bring thee into thy deſired Haven*, to allude to that, *Pſal.* 107, 30. Now the Devil and his Meſſengers are beſetting of thee, and will give thee no reſt; then they ſhall all be trodden under-foot, and thy Soul ſhall act one eternal triumph over them; ſaying, as ſhe of old in her Song did, *O, my Soul, thou haſt trodden down ſtrength.*

2. Then Chriſt will turn all thy Blackneſs into Beauty, all thy ſinful Deformity into perfect Purity and Holineſs for ever; and this is much more ſweet than the former. Alas, ſays the Soul, turn my Water into Wine! true, that is ſweet; but there is that which lies heavier upon me than all the Troubles and Afflictions in the World; and that is, my ſinful blackneſs and deformity. O this ſtained, polluted, defiled Nature of mine! this Fountain of Sin and Enmity againſt God, that is within! This is that which is *the burthen too heavy for me to bear.* Well, for thy comfort know, that thy Husband ſweet Jeſus, will come; and when he comes, he will turn thy Blackneſs into Beauty, thy Sin into Holineſs; then *he will ſanctify thee, and cleanſe thee, that he may preſent thee to himſelf a glorious Spouſe, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing*, Epheſ. 5. 26, 27. Poor Soul, thou haſt now many Stains, many Spots, and thoſe ſuch as thou art apt ſometimes to think are not the Spots of God's *Children*; but then all theſe Spots ſhall be wiped out, and thou ſhalt be without Spots; yea, thou ſhalt not only be without Spot, but Without wrinkle too: There may be Wrinkles where there may be no Spots, and theſe are Blemiſhes. O but then thou ſhalt have neither Spot nor

nor Wrinkle; thou shalt be perfectly freed from lesser, as well as greater Sins; yea, thou shalt have neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing; nothing that looks like Sin, nothing that thou canst suppose to be in the least blemish or defect; there shall not be the least print or footstep of the old *Adam* (as one speaks upon the place) left in thee, or upon thee, but thou shalt be altogether holy and without blemish: Christ will then perfectly fill thee with his own Spirit, beautify thee with his own Image, deck thee with his own Ornament, enamel and irradiate thee with his own Glory, for then he will make thee like himself, both in Holiness and Happiness, 1 *John* 3. 2. Poor Soul, now thou art groaning under a Body of Sin and Death, under the unclean motions of sin, the impure lustings of the Flesh, the cursed imposings of a base, vile, unbelieving Heart, that is imposing upon thee in every Duty, in every Condition, in every Relation. Now thou art pestered with the springings, buddings, blossomings, and ebullitions of Lust and Corruption within thee; but when sweet Jesus comes, there shall be an end of all this. Christ he overlooks all this now, but then he will do it all away, and thou shalt shine with the perfection of Beauty.

3. Then *Christ* will solemnly present thee to his Father as his Spouse, in the presence of all his holy Angels: And O how glorious and joyful will this be? In *Gen.*24.67. we read, that *Isaack took Rebekah, and brought her into his Mothers Tent.* So when dear Jesus comes to consummate the Marriage between him and thee, he will, being attended with all his holy Angels, bring thee into his Fathers House, and will there present thee to him as his Spouse, saying, Father, here is my Spouse, here is one whom in the day of everlasting Love thou gavest unto me, one whom

whom I have redeemed to my ſelf by my Blood, and married to my ſelf by my Spirit in the Goſpel; this is he that I was made Sin and a Curſe for; and tho he was in his Blood and Gore, when I firſt made love to him, yet lo! now here he is ſpotleſs and faultleſs before thee: Father, own him as thy Sons Spouſe, and delight in him for ever. O how ſweet, how glorious will this be! Suppoſe ſome great Prince were married, and upon his marriage ſhould take his *Spouſe* in his hand, and lead her into the Preſence-Chamber of the King his Father, and there preſent her to him, to the end he might take notice of her as his Son's Spouſe, and ſhew ſuitable reſpect and favour to her; what a ſweet thing would this be? But alaſs! what is this to the preſentation *Chriſt* will make of thee to his Father at his coming, *Who will then preſent thee faultleſs into the preſence of his Glory with exceeding joy?* Jude, *v.*24. When *David*, and the Elders of *Iſrael*, brought up the Ark from the Houſe of *Obed-Edom*, 'twas *with great joy and ſhouting*, 1 Chro. 15.25,28. But, O when *Chriſt*, attended with all his holy Angels, ſhall bring, and preſent thee into the preſence of his Father, what joy and ſhoutings will there then be? ſurely there will be great rejoicing on all hands; God the Father will greatly rejoyce, Chriſt the Son will greatly rejoyce, God the Holy Ghoſt will greatly rejoyce, the Angels will greatly rejoyce, thy Soul alſo will greatly rejoyce. God the Father will greatly rejoyce to ſee his Son's Spouſe come home to him ſo richly deck't and adorn'd; *Chriſt* the Son will greatly rejoyce, that he has gotten his Spouſe into his Arms and Boſom, never to part with her more; the Holy Ghoſt will greatly rejoyce, to ſee his work in tying the Marriage-knot between Chriſt and the Soul compleated; the Angels will greatly rejoyce, as being Friends both to the Bride-

groom

groom and Bride, and as partaking with them in the Marriage-Supper; and thou thy self wilt greatly rejoyce, in that now thy happiness is consummated, and that thou shalt for ever lie in the Bosom and Embraces of thy Husband's Love. O how sweet, how glorious will this be!

4. Then Christ will lead thee into the Bride-Chamber, the Mansion he has prepared for thee in the Fathers House, where thou shalt dwell for ever in his Presence, and sit down eternally with him and his Father at the Marriage-Feast: And O how sweet and glorious will this be! Being thus Beautified and presented to the Father, what now remains for thee, but to enter upon thy Lot with all the Saints, and to possess the Joynter Christ made thee in the day of thine Espousal to him, even eternal Life and Glory with himself for ever! What now remains for thee, but to sit down in the full views of his Glory, the full visions of his Face, the full enjoyment of his Presence, the full embraces of his Bosom, the full incomes of his Love, and all for ever? Here in the day of Espousal thou hast had some views of him, thou hast seen his back parts; but then thou shalt *behold his Glory* for ever, *Joh.* 17.24. *Here thou hast seen him through a glass darkly, but then thou shalt see him face to face*, thy visions of him shall be both full and immediate, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. Here there have been some intercourses of love and delight kept up between him and thee, thou hast had some of the kisses of his Mouth, some embraces in his Bosom; but then thou shalt have thy fill of his Love, being sweetly immerst and swallowed up in the Ocean of it for ever: O how sweet will this be! When Christ and thy Soul have met in an Ordinance, how often hast thou said with *Peter*, *'Tis good to be here?* And when he has given thee now and then a little taste of

of his Love, how haſt thou bin raviſht with it, crying out with the Spouſe, *Thy love is better than Wine!* But, O what will it be to enjoy all this in its fulneſs, and that without the leaſt moments interruption for ever! When Chriſt and thy Soul ſhall meet, not in a Duty or Ordinance only, but in Heaven, in the Fathers Houſe; all thou haſt here of him, is but now and then a kiſs of his Mouth, now and then a taſte, a viſit, a deſcent of his Grace and Love; yet this is ſweet, and makes a little Heaven in thy Soul: but when he comes to conſummate the Marriage, then thou ſhalt have everlaſting embraces, and uninterrupted pourings out of Love from him; then no more veilings of his Face, no more withdrawings of his Preſence, no more ſuſpenſions of his Love from thee, but thou ſhalt ſit down in the full enjoyment of all for ever: Then no more need of Love-Letters to paſs between Chriſt and thy Soul, for then there will be full and immediate embraces for ever. Therefore rejoyce in thy Lot, and ſay with the Church in a way of triumph, *Iſa.* 61.10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my Soul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath cloathed me with Garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with a Robe of Righteouſneſs, as a Bridegroom decketh himſelf with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her ſelf with Jewels.*

But may ſome doubting Soul ſay, True, here's comfort enough, and happineſs enough for all Chriſts Spouſes; and were I aſſured of my Eſpouſal to him, I ſhould think it enough to carry me through both Life and Death with comfort; but I am affraid I have neither part nor lot in this matter. I anſwer, If thou art one that loveſt thy Sins, and liveſt in 'em; if thou art one that alloweſt of, and indulgeſt thy ſelf in thy Luſts, yea, in any known Luſt or Sin, be it ſmall or great, then thou haſt too great ground for

for such fears; for I must tell thee, that the Spouses of Christ are of another disposition, they hate Sin, and love Holiness; and do what in them lies to fly the one, and pursue after the other: but I will at present look upon thee to be a poor doubting Spouse of *Christ* that makes this complaint, and so shall leave a double word of encouragement with thee as to this, and thereby put a Conclusion to this Matter.

1. I would speak to thee, as *Samuel* sometimes did to *Saul* in another case, *viz.* when *Saul* told him, *that he had performed the Commandment of the Lord: If so*, says *Samuel*, *what then means this bleating of the Sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the Oxen which I hear?* 1 Sam. 15. 13, 14. So if thou hast indeed no part nor lot in *Christ*, and wert never espoused to him, then (first) what means the bleedings, mournings, and lamentings of thy Soul, under the sense of thy distance and estrangement from Christ, and thy utter unsuitableness to him both in Spirit and Life? *Blessed are they that thus mourn, for they shall be comforted*, Mat. 5. 3. (2*ly.*) What means thy high valuations of him, and the vehement hungrings and thirstings of thy Soul after him? *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be satisfied*, Mat. 5. 6. (3*ly.*) What means the holy tremblings of thy Soul in the thoughts of sinning against him, thy care and sollicitude to please him, thy fear to offend him? 'Tis the Character of a Loyal Wife that *her care is to please her Husband*, and not to offend him, 1 *Cor.* 7. 24. (4*ly.*) What means thy sensibleness of, and mourning under the dishonours of *Christ*, with the longing of thy Soul after his exaltation? *The reproaches of them that reproach him do fall on thee*, Psal. 69. 9. 'Tis the true Spirit of a Loyal Spouse to be concerned for her Husband's Concernments.

These

These and many more such gracious dispositions as are found in thee, do speak comfortably to thy Soul in this case; tho still I would have thee press after the clearest Evidences, and the fullest Assurance of thine Espousal to him.

2. Suppose the worst; yet for thy encouragement, I would speak to thee as the Disciples to the blind Man, *Mark* 10. 49. *Be of good comfort, arise, Christ calleth thee*; he calls thee into these blessed Espousals with himself. And O that thou wouldst do as that blind Man there did, *who arose and came to Jesus*: and assure thy self of this, his Arms are wide open to receive thee. Truly, whoever, or whatever thou art that makest this complaint, whether Spouse or no Spouse, thy proper, and immediate work is now, to close with Christ in a Marriage-covenant: For pray mark the work of a convinced Sinner, and of a doubting beclouded Saint, is the same here; the one, as well as the other, is to believe and close with *Christ*, as if he had never done it before. Suppose then the worst, even that thou wert never as yet espoused to Christ; yet do not despond, but let this be a Day of Espousal between him and thee, casting thy Soul upon him, not questioning his readiness to receive thee. For thy Encouragement, I would say to thee, as one of the Ancients speaks in the same case; *Why stickest and staggerest thou in thy self? Cast thy self upon him, and fear not, he will not withdraw himself so as to let thee fall; cast thy self upon him, resting secure and confident, that he will receive and save thee.* Thus have I now done; Saint, Spouse of *Christ*, what remains, but that thou love, reverence, and obey thy Lord and Head, living a Life of dependance upon him, as also of longing expectation of his coming to consummate the Marriage between him and thee? What remains, but that thou shouldst take

take up the words of the Apostle, making the same inference from thine Espousal to Christ, that he does from the dissolution of all things, saying in thy own Name and others, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11, 12. *What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the Day of God!* Sinner, what remains for thee to do, but to give up thy Name and Soul to Christ in a Marriage-Covenant, and be happy for ever? I will conclude all with those word, *Rev.* 19. 9. *Blessed are they which are called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.*

Soli Deo Gloria.

FINIS.